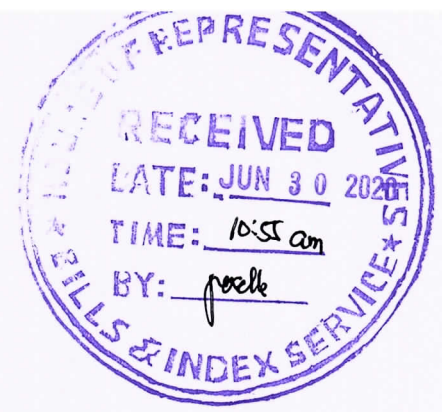


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7043



Introduced By: Representative Shernee A. Tan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to require the allotment of at least two (2) places of worship or prayer rooms in every government building, military camp, hospital, and privately-owned mall, factory, hospital, and other big business establishment, where employees, visitors and customers can freely practice their religious belief.

Although our Constitution explicitly mandates the inviolability of the separation of Church and State, the same fundamental law of the land clearly guarantees the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession, without discrimination or preference.

It may be observed in our country that in practically all government buildings, military camps, hospitals, and even in privately-owned malls, large factories, hospitals and other big business establishments, there is a Roman Catholic Chapel. If this is a way of respecting the free exercise of one's religious belief then it is also fair to provide another prayer room where the Muslims or other non-Catholic religious sectors may freely exercise their faith.

It is worthy to note that although the provision of Catholic Chapels in privately owned business establishments is voluntary on their part, this clearly discriminates against their employees and customers, who belong to other religious faith like the Islam and other non-sectarian organizations as there is no place for them to practice their faith.

In the United States, the 1964 Civil Rights Act provides that an employer may not discriminate against a person because one adheres to a particular faith, and that employers must accommodate an employee's religious practices unless doing so would cause undue hardship to the employer. On the basis of this law, there have been growing number of corporations, which are modifying their rules and procedure to show sensitivity to the increasing number of Muslim employees and customers. For instance, Watermark Donut Co., a franchisee for Dunkin' Donuts, has provided religious accommodation for its Muslim employees the opportunity to perform the five (5) daily prayers.

Unlike other religions, Muslim religious practices regard them as compulsory religious duties. Islam mandates that believers perform prayer five times each day. During act of worship, Muslim stand, bow and touch the forehead to the ground. Since worship is to be performed in any quiet, dry and clean place, a prayer room is necessary for some measure of privacy.

The foregoing reasons warrant the approval of this important piece of legislation is earnestly sought.



SHERNEE A. TAN
Representative
Kusug Tausug Partylist

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AN ACT

MANDATING THE ALLOTMENT OF AT LEAST TWO (2) PLACES OF WORSHIP OR PRAYER ROOMS IN EVERY GOVERNMENT BUILDING, MILITARY CAMP, HOSPITAL, AND PRIVATELY-OWNED MALL, FACTORY, HOSPITAL, AND OTHER BIG BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives
of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. There shall be allotted at least two (2) places of worship or prayer rooms, where employees, visitors and customers can freely practice their religious belief in every government building, military camp, hospital, and privately-owned mall, factory, hospital, and other big business establishment.

SEC. 2. Within sixty (60) days from its approval, the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), in consultation with the Civil Service Commission, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of National Defense (DND), and a representative from the business sector, shall formulate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SEC. 3. Any person found guilty of violating this Act shall suffer the penalty of one (1) year imprisonment or a fine equivalent to six (6) months salary or both at the discretion of the court.

The penalty herein provided shall be imposed upon the highest official of the Department or office concerned or, if a juridical person, the Chairman or President of the corporation.

SEC. 4. All laws, rules and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,