



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Nineteenth Congress
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 3725

Introduced by Hon. MUJIV S. HATAMAN of the Lone District of Basilan

EXPLANATORY NOTE

**AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS
NATIONAL HIJAB DAY**

Wearing a hijab is probably one of the most recognizable expressions of the Muslim faith among women in the world. Unfortunately, it is also being used as an inexcusable source of social stigma and discrimination.

The prejudice against Muslim women who wear hijab has grown so prevalent in society that on February 1, 2013, the first World Hijab Day or WHD had been observed in order to raise awareness on the matter and hopefully eliminate the stigma and discrimination associated with the practice.

As this representation has stated on countless occasions, discrimination on the basis of religion is very real, not only here in the Philippines but in other places in the world as well. And this discrimination manifests in countless forms of cruelty and oppression.

For example, in the United States after 9/11 attack, there were Muslim women who were victims of ill-treatment and robbery. Discrimination and maltreatment of our Hijabi all around the world continue because people fail to understand the reason for wearing the hijab.

In the Philippines, Muslim women who wear hijabs were asked to refrain from doing so in some universities, a fact that forced them to either comply or drop out. If you are a Muslim woman wearing a hijab in public, discrimination makes it very difficult for you to find a job, purchase property or even hail a taxicab. This is the sad reality in our society today.

Hence, this bill. Section 5, Article 3 of the Constitution states that, "No law shall be made respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. The free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or

preference, shall forever be allowed. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.”

This measure aims to declare February 1 as National Hijab Day in order to raise awareness on the religious practice of wearing a hijab. It also aims to eliminate misconceptions about wearing a hijab, promote deep understanding among non-Muslims on the practice and encourage schools to educate the young so that they may appreciate why Muslim women wear hijabs.

This measure has been filed and re-filed since the 16th Congress by then Anak Mindanao Rep. Sitti Djalila Turabin-Hataman. In fact, during the 17th and 18th Congress, it was approved by the House of Representatives on third and final reading. Unfortunately, it did not get Senate approval.

It is our aim to raise awareness and to put a stop to all sorts of discriminations, including discrimination against Muslim women. With this bill, we hope to foster deeper respect and understanding among and between Filipinos of varying cultures and faith toward national unity and peace.

Therefore, the immediate passage of this bill is highly sought.



HON. MUJIV S. HATAMAN
Representative
Lone District of Basilan



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**AN ACT DECLARING THE FIRST DAY OF FEBRUARY OF EVERY YEAR AS
NATIONAL HIJAB DAY AND PROMOTING AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE
MUSLIM TRADITION OF WEARING A HIJAB**

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

1 Section. 1. ***National Hijab Day***. The first day of February of every year is hereby declared as
2 "National Hijab Day."
3

4 Sec. 2. ***Declaration of Policy***. The State recognizes the role of women in nation-building, and
5 shall ensure the fundamental equality of women and men before the law. The free exercise and
6 enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination and or preference, shall
7 be forever allowed.
8

9 Sec 3. ***Definition of Terms***. As used in this Act, "*hijab*" refers to a veil that covers the head
10 and chest, which is particularly worn by a Muslim female beyond the age of puberty in the
11 presence of adult males outside of their immediate family. It may further refer to any head,
12 face, or body covering worn by Muslim women that conforms to a certain standard of modesty.
13

14 *Hijabi* refers to a Muslim woman wearing the hijab.

15
16 Sec. 4. ***Objectives***.

- 17
18 a.) To encourage Muslim and non-Muslim women to wear the *hijab* and experience the virtue
19 in wearing it;
20 b.) To remove the misconception of wearing the hijab that has been misunderstood as a symbol
21 of oppression, terrorism and lack of freedom;
22 c.) To stop discrimination against Muslim *hijabi*;
23 d.) To protect the freedom of religion and the right of Muslim women to practice their religion;

- 1 e.) To promote and deepen understanding amongst non-Muslims about the value of wearing a
2 *hijab* as an act of modesty and dignity of Muslim women;
3 f.) To promote appreciation for diversity in expression of oneself and one's faith and religion,
4 and
5 g.) To promote tolerance and acceptance of other lifestyles amongst the citizenry.
6

7 **Sec. 5. *Awareness Program.*** The National Hijab Day shall be observed on every first day of
8 February to showcase *Hijabis'* rights and the Muslim tradition of wearing a *Hijab*. Muslim and
9 non-Muslim women shall be encouraged to don the *hijab* on this day.
10

11 Government institutions, schools, and the private sector shall be encouraged to observe
12 this event in a manner that promotes understanding and awareness among its employees and
13 students of the objective of the campaign.
14

15 **Sec. 6. *Implementing Agency.*** The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) is
16 hereby mandated as the lead agency in promoting and raising consciousness about the practice
17 of wearing a *hijab*. It shall conduct activities that shall aim to deepen understanding of the *hijab*
18 as a lifestyle choice amongst Muslim women. Towards this end, it may conduct fora,
19 information dissemination campaigns and other educational drive to effectively meet the
20 objectives of this Act.
21

22 **Sec. 7. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official
23 Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
24

25 *Approved,*