

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5736



Introduced by

HON. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
and
HON. JUDE A. ACIDRE

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 HIJAB

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution guarantees the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship, without discrimination or preference. No religious test shall be required for the exercise of civil or political rights.

In the Philippines, there are around ten (10) million Muslims. And one of the practices and visible and distinguishable expression of the Islamic faith of Muslim women is the wearing of the hijab. However, this has been unjustifiably used as a source of discrimination and prejudice against them. To fight against such discrimination, an annual observance since 2013 is globally commemorated among 190 countries on the first day of February as World Hijab Day.

In line with this constitutional fiat to protect Muslim women and to further understand the value of wearing hijab, this bill seeks to declare the first of February every year as National Hijab Day.

This measure has been filed since the 16th Congress. In the 18th Congress, it has been approved on third reading and it was principally filed by Representatives Sangcopan, Balindong, Sinsuat, Dimaporo (Khalid), Savellano, Dimaporo (Abdullah), Guya, and Adiong.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan



Rep. JUDE A. ACIDRE
Representative, Tingog Sinirangan

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “National Hijab Day Act.”

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

Section 3. *Definition of Terms.* As used in this Act:

- a. *Hijab* refers to a modest garment worn by Muslim women to cover their hair and neck; and,
- b. *Hijabi* refers to a Muslim woman wearing a *hijab*.

Section 4. *Objectives.* The objectives of this Act are as follows:

- a. To promote tolerance and inclusivity in order to ensure the free exercise of *hijabis* in practicing their religion;

- b. To prevent discrimination against *hijabis*;
- c. To encourage women to show their solidarity by wearing *hijab* during the National Hijab Day; and,
- d. To remove the misconception in the wearing of *hijab* and deepen the understanding of the value of wearing *hijab* as an act of modesty and dignity for *hijabis*.

Section 5. *National Hijab Day.* The first day of February of each year is hereby declared as the observance of National Hijab Day to foster solidarity with *hijabis* by encouraging the wearing of *hijab* by women in public.

Section 6. *Public Awareness.* Government agencies, schools, and the private sector are encouraged to observe National Hijab Day in an appropriate manner that promotes the objectives of this Act through awareness activities.

Section 7. *Implementing Agency.* The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) is hereby mandated as the lead agency in the observance of National Hijab Day in consultation with the Bangsamoro Women Commission. NCMF shall also actively coordinate with government agencies, schools, and the private sector to encourage them to observe the National Hijab Day.

The NCMF shall conduct nationwide activities that shall aim to deepen the understanding of the *hijab* as a lifestyle choice through fora, information dissemination campaigns, and other educational drives to effectively attain the objectives of this Act.

Section 8. *Separability Clause.* If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provisions not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

Section 9. *Repealing Clause.* Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 10. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,