



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6348



INTRODUCED BY: REP. ESMAEL G. MANGUDADATU

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Religious freedom is one of the most cherished guarantees under the 1987 Philippine Constitution, and one of the cornerstones of a democratic society. Article III, Section 5 provides: “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.”

This provision clearly prohibits any act of the State that would impede the practice of religion. It likewise urges, if not imposes upon the government the obligation to ensure that spaces, opportunities, and facilities exist where citizens can freely practice their faith.

Article III, Section 5 of the Bill of Rights guarantees the free exercise of religion. This constitutional protection extends beyond belief; it encompasses acts of worship, such as prayer, fasting, and religious assembly.

The Honorable Supreme Court, in the case of *Peralta vs Philippine Postal Corporation* (G.R. No. 223395, December 04, 2018), had the opportunity to discuss religious freedom as a Constitutional mandate, thus:

“Religious freedom, however, as a constitutional mandate is not inhibition of profound reverence for religion and is not denial of its influence in human affairs. Religion as a profession of faith to an active power that binds and elevates man to his Creator is recognized. And, in so far as it instills into the minds the purest principles of morality, its influence is deeply felt and highly

*appreciated. When the Filipino people, in the preamble of their Constitution, implored "the aid of Divine Providence, in order to establish a government that shall embody their ideals, conserve and develop the patrimony of the nation, promote the general welfare, and secure to themselves and their posterity the blessings of independence under a regime of justice, liberty and democracy," they thereby manifested their intense religious nature and placed unfaltering reliance upon Him who guides the destinies of men and nations. **The elevating influence of religion in human society is recognized here as elsewhere. In fact, certain general concessions are indiscriminately accorded to religious sects and denominations.** Our Constitution and laws exempt from taxation properties devoted exclusively to religious purposes (sec. 14, subsec. 3, Art. VI, Constitution of the Philippines and sec. 1, subsec. 4, Ordinance appended thereto; Assessment Law, sec. 344, par. [c]. Adm. Code). Sectarian aid is not prohibited when a priest, preacher, minister or other religious teacher or dignitary as such is assigned to the armed forces or to any penal institution, orphanage or leprosarium (sec. 13, subsec. 3, Art. VI, Constitution of the Philippines). Optional religious instruction in the public schools is by constitutional mandate allowed (sec. 5, Art. XIII, Constitution of the Philippines, in relation to sec. 928, Adm. Code).*

In relation thereto, the present proposed bill likewise does not violate the non – establishment clause of the 1987 Constitution. This clause simply ensures that the government cannot establish a state sponsored religious denomination, aid any religion, nor force anyone to follow or disbelieve in a particular religion. Indeed, the proposed bill does not mandate or require anyone to practice the Islamic faith. The proposed bill likewise does not require any person to convert to Islam. Neither does the Government in enacting this bill, endorse a particular religion. The proposed bill merely seeks to provide a safe and secure place for our Muslim brothers and sisters, to practice their faith with dignity.

Moreover, the constitutional principle of separation of Church and State, as provided in Article II, Section 6, of the 1987 Constitution, does not prohibit government from adopting measures that facilitate religious freedom. On the contrary, jurisprudence has clarified that the State may adopt laws and policies to accommodate religion.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines has consistently recognized the expansive protection afforded to religious freedom.

In *Estrada v. Escritor* (G.R. No. 149486, June 22, 2006), the Honorable Supreme Court held that the Constitution adheres to the benevolent neutrality approach that gives room for accommodation of religious exercises as required by the Free Exercise Clause. This, and

related precedents establish that the State must not only refrain from interfering with religious exercise but must actively create conditions where such exercise is possible and unimpeded.

The proposed bill likewise reinforces Article XIV, Section 17, which mandates that the State shall recognize, respect, and protect the rights of cultural communities. Muslims, as one of the largest religious and cultural minorities, must be given equal protection and opportunities to practice their beliefs. The Philippines is home to an estimated 10 to 12 million Muslims, or around roughly, 10% of the national population, according to some demographic studies. While concentrated in Mindanao, a significant number of Muslims live in Metro Manila, Cebu, and other urban centers.

On the international sphere, the Philippines is a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which in Article 18 recognizes:

“Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.”

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 18, likewise affirms religious freedom and the free exercise thereof, through worship, observance and practice.

By mandating establishments to provide prayer rooms, the Philippines aligns itself with established international law, global standards and best practices in respecting religious diversity.

Muslims are bound by religious duty to perform five daily prayers (Salah) at prescribed times. In many establishments—shopping malls, airports, bus terminals, schools, hospitals, offices—there are no designated spaces to perform these prayers. Muslims are often compelled to pray in hallways, staircases, or parking areas, leading to discomfort, social stigma, and even security concerns.

In countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom, prayer rooms in public establishments are standard facilities. The Philippines, as a multicultural nation, must not lag behind in ensuring that Muslims are able to perform their religious obligations in dignity and safety.

Muslims working in factories and offices, studying in universities, traveling through airports and seaports, or simply visiting shopping malls, face unnecessary burdens due to the lack of designated prayer spaces. This exclusion undermines their constitutional rights, their dignity, and their sense of belonging to the larger Philippine society.

Corollary thereto, this measure seeks to:

1. Require establishments of a certain size or type to provide prayer rooms for Muslims.
2. Establish technical standards for prayer rooms, including provisions for ablution (wudhu).
3. Ensure gender-sensitive, safe, and accessible facilities.
4. Mandate government monitoring and enforcement through relevant agencies.
5. Provide incentives for compliance and penalties for non-compliance.

The enactment of this law will reaffirm the Philippines' longstanding tradition of respect for religious diversity and freedom, while addressing the practical challenges faced by millions of Filipino Muslims in urban and rural areas alike. By institutionalizing prayer rooms in establishments, the State acknowledges the cultural and religious identity of Muslim Filipinos, promotes inclusivity, and strengthens interfaith harmony. This measure is indeed a moral and social imperative that reflects the Philippines' commitment to unity in diversity.

The approval of this bill is earnestly sought.


ESMAEL G. MANGUDADATU



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AN ACT REQUIRING ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ESTABLISHMENTS IN THE PHILIPPINES TO PROVIDE PRAYER ROOMS FOR MUSLIMS, ENSURING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM, PROMOTING INCLUSIVITY, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

INTRODUCED BY: REP. ESMAEL G. MANGUDADATU

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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE. This Act shall be known as the “Muslim Prayer Room Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. DECLARATION OF POLICY. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

- a. Uphold the Constitutional right to religious freedom as guaranteed under Article III, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution;
- b. Recognize the religious and cultural identity of Filipino Muslims, consistent with Article XIV, Section 17 of the Constitution, which mandates the recognition and protection of the rights of cultural communities;
- c. Ensure inclusivity and equality in establishments by mandating the availability of prayer rooms for Muslims in workplaces, educational institutions, transportation hubs, commercial centers, hospitals, and government facilities;

- d. Balance religious accommodation with public welfare and business viability, recognizing that respect for religious practices enhances productivity, harmony, and national unity; and
- e. Align domestic law with international commitments, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 18) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 18), both of which guarantee the right to manifest one's religion in worship, observance, practice, and teaching.

SECTION 3. OBJECTIVES. This Act seeks to achieve the following:

- a. Guarantee access to safe, clean, and dignified prayer rooms for Muslims in establishments of certain classification and size;
- b. Prescribe minimum standards for the construction, maintenance, and operation of prayer rooms, including provisions for ablution (wudhu) facilities;
- c. Provide guidelines for establishments to ensure compliance, while offering reasonable exemptions to micro and small enterprises;
- d. Create a framework for monitoring and enforcement, assigning roles to the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), and relevant agencies;
- e. Establish penalties for non-compliance and incentives for early or exemplary compliance; and
- f. Promote interfaith respect and inclusivity, reducing social stigma and ensuring equal treatment of Muslims in all public and private establishments.

SECTION 4. DEFINITION OF TERMS. For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. *Prayer Room* – A designated, permanent, enclosed, and clean space within an establishment intended for Muslim prayer, meditation, and reflection. The prayer room shall be free from distractions, noise, and inappropriate uses, and shall contain proper orientation towards the Qiblah (direction of Mecca).
- b. *Wudhu Facility* – A sanitary washing facility for ritual ablution prior to prayer, equipped with running water, proper drainage, and safety measures to prevent slips or accidents.
- c. *Establishment* – Refers to any public or private facility where people work, study, transact, or gather, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Commercial establishments such as malls, shopping centers, hotels, and restaurants;
 - 2. Transportation hubs such as airports, seaports, bus terminals, and train stations;

3. Government offices, both national and local;
 4. Educational institutions, whether public or private, including universities, colleges, and large secondary schools;
 5. Health care institutions such as hospitals, clinics, and medical centers;
 6. Industrial establishments such as factories, large warehouses, and manufacturing plants; and
 7. Other public spaces as may be determined by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).
- d. *Threshold* – The minimum number of employees, students, or regular visitors that shall trigger the mandatory requirement for prayer rooms, as may be defined by the IRR, provided that establishments with significant Muslim presence shall not be exempt.
 - e. *Accessibility* – The prayer room shall be reasonably accessible within the premises, shall include provisions for persons with disabilities (PWDs), and shall be clearly marked with visible signage.
 - f. *Gender Sensitivity* – Prayer rooms shall observe gender considerations, with either separate sections for men and women, or scheduling protocols that ensure modesty and privacy consistent with Islamic practice.
 - g. *Compliance Certification* – A written document issued by the appropriate government agency, confirming that the establishment has complied with the requirements of this Act.

SECTION 5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES. The interpretation and implementation of this Act shall be guided by the following principles:

1. Religious Freedom is a Fundamental Right. The free exercise of religion shall be respected and accommodated to the greatest extent possible.
2. Inclusivity and Equality. Establishments must recognize the equal dignity of Muslim citizens by providing adequate facilities for prayer.
3. Shared Responsibility. The State, private sector, and civil society share responsibility in creating an environment where religious practices can be freely observed.
4. Reasonableness and Proportionality. Obligations imposed upon establishments shall be proportionate to their size, capacity, and resources, ensuring fairness in compliance, as defined in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).
5. Harmony and National Unity. By respecting the religious practices of Muslims, the measure strengthens interfaith harmony and national solidarity.

SECTION 6. SCOPE AND COVERAGE. This Act shall apply to all public and private establishments Nationwide.

SECTION 7. NON-DISCRIMINATION CLAUSE. No establishment shall discriminate against any Muslim employee, student, or visitor seeking to use the prayer room. Refusal to allow access, harassment, or other acts that obstruct prayer shall constitute a violation of this Act, without prejudice to other criminal, civil, or administrative liabilities under existing laws.

CHAPTER II COVERAGE AND SCOPE OF ESTABLISHMENTS

SECTION 8. COVERED ESTABLISHMENTS. The following establishments are required to provide prayer rooms pursuant to this Act:

- a. Commercial Centers – Shopping malls, department stores, supermarkets, hotels, resorts, convention centers, restaurants, cinemas, and other entertainment hubs.
- b. Transportation Hubs – Airports, seaports, major bus terminals, train stations, and integrated transport systems.
- c. Government Offices – National agencies, bureaus, commissions, and local government units (LGUs).
- d. Educational Institutions – Universities, colleges, and secondary schools.
- e. Health Facilities – Hospitals, medical centers, and clinics.
- f. Industrial Establishments – Factories, warehouses, and large-scale manufacturing plants.
- g. Other Establishments – Such other establishments as may be identified by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

SECTION 9. THRESHOLD REQUIREMENTS. a. Establishments with at least the number of employees, students, or regular patrons as provided in the IRR shall be required to establish and maintain two prayer room, subject to the technical standards provided under this Act.

- b. Establishments with a daily average attendance of at least the number of individuals, regardless of religious breakdown, as provided in the IRR, shall automatically be required to establish and maintain two prayer rooms, recognizing the likelihood of a diverse population.
- c. For establishments with fewer than the required number of Muslim constituents, as provided in the IRR, voluntary compliance shall be strongly encouraged and may be eligible for tax incentives.

SECTION 10. SIZE AND LOCATION REQUIREMENTS. a. The prayer room shall be located within the premises of the establishment in a safe, clean, and accessible area, preferably near restrooms or water facilities for ease of ablution.

- b. The minimum size of the prayer room shall be proportional to the number of Muslims regularly present and the average number of visitors, as determined by the IRR.
- c. Where physical constraints exist, establishments shall consult with local building officials and religious authorities to designate an alternative space that meets the standards of this Act.

SECTION 11. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION HUBS. a. Airports and seaports handling domestic or international flights and vessels shall be required to establish and maintain at least two dedicated prayer room per terminal.

- b. Bus terminals, integrated transport hubs, and train stations with daily ridership exceeding the number of passengers, visitors and employees, as provided in the IRR, shall likewise establish and maintain at least two dedicated prayer room accessible to the general public.
- c. Signage directing Muslim passengers to the prayer rooms shall be prominently displayed in English, Filipino, and Arabic.

SECTION 12. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. a. Public and private universities, colleges, and large secondary schools with at least the number of students, as provided in the IRR shall establish and maintain two prayer rooms within campus grounds.

- b. The prayer rooms shall be made available during school hours and must not be scheduled in a manner that restricts access during prayer times, particularly Dhuhr (midday) and Asr (afternoon).
- c. The Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) shall issue guidelines to integrate prayer room requirements into school infrastructure development programs.

SECTION 13. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR HOSPITALS AND HEALTH FACILITIES.

- a. Hospitals and medical centers shall provide prayer rooms for both staff and patients, recognizing the spiritual needs of Muslim patients during illness and recovery.
- b. Prayer rooms in hospitals shall be located near chapels, meditation rooms, or wellness centers, to ensure inclusivity for all faiths while safeguarding distinct spaces for Muslims.
- c. Hospitals with specialized departments such as oncology, dialysis, and intensive care must provide protocols to allow patients or their families access to prayer facilities, consistent with health and safety standards.

SECTION 14. SPECIAL PROVISIONS FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICES. a. Government buildings serving large numbers of constituents, including city halls, provincial capitols, regional centers, and frontline service offices (e.g., LTO, SSS, PhilHealth), shall establish and maintain two prayer rooms accessible to employees and the general public.

b. Local government units (LGUs) are encouraged to include prayer room requirements in their Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUPs) and infrastructure development strategies.

SECTION 15. VOLUNTARY ESTABLISHMENTS. Establishments not covered under the mandatory provisions of this Act may voluntarily provide prayer rooms. Such voluntary compliance shall entitle them to recognition under the Muslim Inclusivity Seal of Compliance, a program to be developed by the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) in coordination with the DTI and DOLE.

SECTION 16. EXEMPTIONS. The following exemptions are as follows:

- a. Micro and small enterprises, as defined under Republic Act No. 9501 (Magna Carta for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises), shall be exempted, unless their Muslim presence exceeds the percentage of their workforce or clientele, as determined by the IRR.
- b. Establishments with severe physical or structural limitations preventing the construction of prayer rooms may be granted conditional exemptions by the appropriate government agency, provided they designate alternative accommodations (e.g., multi-faith rooms).

SECTION 17. INTEGRATION INTO BUILDING CODES. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in consultation with the NCMF and relevant religious authorities, shall amend the National Building Code (Presidential Decree No. 1096) to incorporate prayer room requirements into building permits and occupancy certificates for new or renovated establishments falling under the coverage of this Act.

CHAPTER III

STANDARDS FOR PRAYER ROOMS

SECTION 18. GENERAL STANDARDS. All prayer rooms established pursuant to this Act shall:

- a. Be clean, safe, and conducive to prayer and reflection, consistent with Islamic values of purity and modesty;

- b. Be designed and maintained in such a way that prevents any form of misuse or inappropriate activities;
- c. Be available for use during all hours that the establishment is open to employees, students, or the public;
- d. Include provisions that ensure gender sensitivity, accessibility, and cultural respect.

SECTION 19. ORIENTATION AND LAYOUT. All prayer rooms established pursuant to this Act shall observe the following:

- a. The prayer room shall be oriented towards the Qiblah (direction of Mecca), with clear markings (e.g., prayer mats, indicators, or signage).
- b. The layout shall include open, uncluttered space to allow worshippers to perform standing, bowing, and prostrating positions without obstruction.
- c. Storage areas for shoes, bags, and personal belongings shall be provided outside or adjacent to the prayer room.

SECTION 20. SPACE REQUIREMENTS.

- a. The minimum size of the prayer room shall be proportional to the number of Muslims regularly present and the average number of visitors, as determined by the IRR.
- b. Space requirements may be adjusted by the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) in consultation with the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).
- c. Multi-level establishments shall provide prayer rooms on at least one floor accessible to the general public.

SECTION 21. GENDER SENSITIVITY.

- a. Prayer rooms shall have separate spaces for men and women, divided by clear and appropriately broad partitions or separate rooms;
- b. Signage indicating the schedule or division of space shall be prominently displayed.

SECTION 22. ABLUTION FACILITIES (WUDHU). a. Every prayer room shall be equipped with or located adjacent to a wudhu facility, which shall include:

- 1. Running water supply;
- 2. Wash basins or foot-washing stations;
- 3. Proper drainage and non-slip flooring;
- 4. Hand dryers or paper towels;
- 5. Adequate ventilation to prevent dampness or odor.

- b. Ablution facilities shall be distinct from ordinary restrooms, to preserve cleanliness and dignity.
- c. Maintenance staff shall be trained in proper cleaning standards, recognizing the religious significance of the facility.

SECTION 23. CLEANLINESS AND MAINTENANCE. a. Establishments shall ensure that prayer rooms are regularly cleaned and sanitized, with cleaning schedules displayed publicly.

- b. No food, drinks, smoking, or unrelated activities shall be allowed in the prayer room.
- c. Prayer mats, rugs, and furnishings shall be kept in good condition and replaced when worn out.

SECTION 24. ACCESSIBILITY. a. Prayer rooms shall be reasonably accessible within the premises of the establishment, with clear signage directing Muslims to their location.

- b. Signage shall be provided in Filipino, English, and Arabic, and, where appropriate, in the local dialect.
- c. Persons with disabilities (PWDs) shall be able to access the prayer room, with ramps, wide doors, and other accommodations in accordance with Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons).

SECTION 25. SAFETY STANDARDS. a. Prayer rooms shall comply with all applicable provisions of the National Building Code (Presidential Decree No. 1096), Fire Code of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 9514), and related safety regulations.

- b. Adequate lighting, ventilation, and emergency exits shall be provided.
- c. Prayer rooms shall not be located in unsafe areas such as basements prone to flooding, near hazardous materials, or in areas with insufficient security.

SECTION 26. MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT. a. Establishments shall designate a Prayer Room Administrator from among their employees or staff to oversee cleanliness, safety, and compliance.

- b. Muslim employees, students, or representatives may be consulted in the management of the prayer room, particularly in matters of scheduling and layout.
- c. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) shall be authorized to conduct periodic inspections and issue recommendations to establishments.

SECTION 27. MULTI-FAITH ACCOMMODATION. a. Where establishments already maintain multi-faith or meditation rooms, a dedicated section for Muslims shall be required, with proper Qiblah orientation and ablution access.

- b. Multi-faith spaces shall not substitute for the requirements of this Act unless they comply with the technical standards provided herein.

SECTION 28. INTEGRATION WITH BUILDING DESIGN. a. For new establishments covered by this Act, prayer rooms shall be integrated into the architectural and engineering design at the planning stage.

- b. For existing establishments, compliance shall be phased within the transition period.
- c. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in consultation with the NCMF, shall issue detailed design standards to guide architects, engineers, and developers.

SECTION 29. CULTURAL SENSITIVITY. a. The design and furnishings of the prayer room shall reflect modesty and simplicity, consistent with Islamic principles.

- b. Display of inappropriate imagery, decorations, or advertisements within the prayer room shall be strictly prohibited.
- c. Establishments are encouraged to consult with Muslim religious leaders during the design and implementation of prayer rooms.

CHAPTER IV IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

SECTION 30. LEAD IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES. The primary responsibility for the implementation of this Act shall rest upon the following agencies:

- a. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – To oversee compliance in workplaces, factories, and offices;
- b. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – To regulate compliance in commercial establishments, hotels, malls, and retail centers;
- c. Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) – To integrate prayer room requirements into building permits and occupancy standards;
- d. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) – To monitor compliance by local government units (LGUs) and assist in enforcement at the city and municipal level;

- e. Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – To enforce prayer room requirements in public and private schools, universities, and other educational institutions;
- f. Department of Health (DOH) – To implement provisions relating to hospitals, medical centers, and health facilities;
- g. National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) – To act as the central advisory and technical agency in ensuring religious appropriateness, cultural sensitivity, and alignment with Islamic practices.

SECTION 31. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROLE. a. Cities and municipalities shall include prayer room provisions in the issuance of business permits and renewals, requiring establishments to present proof of compliance.

- b. Local building officials shall ensure that the construction of new establishments integrates prayer room requirements in accordance with the National Building Code and the IRR of this Act.
- c. Barangay officials shall coordinate with establishments in their jurisdictions to facilitate monitoring and community awareness.

SECTION 32. JOINT MONITORING TEAMS. a. Joint monitoring teams shall be established at the national, regional, and provincial levels, composed of representatives from DOLE, DTI, DPWH, DILG, and NCMF.

- b. These teams shall:
 - 1. Conduct annual inspections of covered establishments;
 - 2. Issue compliance certificates;
 - 3. Submit reports to Congress every two years regarding the implementation of this Act;
 - 4. Recommend sanctions against establishments found in violation.

SECTION 33. COMPLIANCE CERTIFICATION. a. Establishments covered under this Act shall secure a Certificate of Compliance from the relevant implementing agency, attesting that the prayer room meets the standards prescribed in Chapter III.

- b. Certificates of Compliance shall be a prerequisite for:
 - 1. Renewal of business permits;
 - 2. Renewal of building occupancy permits;
 - 3. Renewal of accreditation for hospitals, schools, or similar institutions.
- c. The validity of the Certificate of Compliance shall be for three (3) years, subject to renewal after reinspection.

SECTION 34. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS. a. Establishments shall maintain a logbook or digital record of prayer room usage, cleanliness schedules, and maintenance activities, to be inspected upon demand by authorized agencies.

- b. The NCMF shall prepare an annual report summarizing compliance rates, challenges, and recommendations for policy improvement, to be submitted to the President and Congress.

SECTION 35. INTEGRATION WITH OTHER LAWS. a. Compliance with this Act shall be deemed compliance with relevant provisions of the Labor Code of the Philippines, the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Law (Republic Act No. 11058), and the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons (Republic Act No. 7277).

- b. Prayer room provisions shall form part of the requirements for accreditation of establishments under the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) and similar regulatory bodies.

SECTION 36. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION. a. Muslim employees, students, and community representatives shall be allowed to participate in consultations relating to the design, operation, and maintenance of prayer rooms.

- b. Establishments are encouraged to form Prayer Room Committees composed of Muslim employees or stakeholders to advise management on prayer schedules, cleanliness, and cultural sensitivity.

SECTION 37. FUNDING OF IMPLEMENTATION. a. The initial funding for government agencies tasked with monitoring shall be sourced from their current appropriations.

- b. Subsequent funding shall be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA) under the budgets of DOLE, DTI, DPWH, DILG, DepEd, CHED, DOH, and NCMF.
- c. LGUs shall allocate a portion of their Local Development Fund (LDF) to assist small and medium establishments in complying with the prayer room requirement.

SECTION 38. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. a. The NCMF, in cooperation with Islamic scholars and local religious leaders, shall issue advisories and technical guidelines on the religious and cultural requirements of prayer rooms.

- b. The DPWH and the United Architects of the Philippines (UAP) shall prepare a Prayer Room Design Manual, to serve as a standard reference for architects, engineers, and building officials.

SECTION 39. AWARENESS AND EDUCATION CAMPAIGN. a. The DTI, DOLE, and NCMF shall jointly conduct nationwide information campaigns to educate establishments, employers, and the public on the importance of prayer rooms for Muslims.

- b. Educational institutions shall integrate the principle of religious accommodation in values education, citizenship, and social studies curricula, consistent with interfaith harmony.

SECTION 40. PERIODIC REVIEW. Congress shall conduct a mandatory review of this Act every five (5) years, to assess its effectiveness, amend provisions as necessary, and evaluate the impact on Muslim communities.

Public hearings shall be held with Muslim organizations, business associations, LGUs, and civil society groups to ensure balanced perspectives in the review process.

CHAPTER V APPROPRIATIONS, INCENTIVES, AND PENALTIES

SECTION 41. APPROPRIATIONS. The amount necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned implementing agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (GAA).

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall ensure the timely release of appropriated funds for the agencies mandated to monitor and enforce compliance.

SECTION 42. FUNDING SUPPORT FOR LGUS. a. Local government units (LGUs) shall be entitled to receive matching grants from the national government to support compliance, particularly for public markets, terminals, and municipal buildings.

- b. LGUs may allocate up to five percent (5%) of their Local Development Fund (LDF) to support the establishment or improvement of prayer rooms within their jurisdiction.
- c. Priority shall be given to cities and municipalities with large Muslim populations or those serving as transit hubs.

SECTION 43. ASSISTANCE TO MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES (MSES).

- a. Recognizing the limited financial capacity of micro and small enterprises, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), in coordination with the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF), shall establish a Subsidy and Assistance Program to help MSEs voluntarily comply with this Act.
- b. Assistance may be provided in the form of:

1. Design templates and architectural assistance;
2. Technical guidance on standards;
3. Partial subsidies for construction costs;
4. Tax credits for voluntary compliance.

SECTION 44. INCENTIVES FOR EARLY OR VOLUNTARY COMPLIANCE.

Establishments that voluntarily comply with or exceed the requirements of this Act shall be entitled to the following incentives:

- a. Tax Deduction – Expenses incurred in constructing or maintaining prayer rooms shall be deductible from gross income for income tax purposes, subject to rules of the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).
- b. Muslim Inclusivity Seal of Compliance – A recognition program administered by the NCMF and DTI that will publicly certify establishments as Muslim-friendly, enhancing their reputation and marketability.
- c. Preferential Treatment in Government Programs – Compliant establishments may be given preference in government accreditation, bidding opportunities, and partnerships, consistent with applicable procurement laws.

SECTION 45. PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE. Any establishment covered under this Act that fails to provide the required prayer room shall be subject to the following penalties:

- a. First Offense – Written warning and directive to comply within six (6) months.
- b. Second Offense – Fine of not less than ₱300,000.00 but not more than ₱500,000.00, depending on the size of the establishment.
- c. Third Offense – Fine of not less than ₱500,000.00 but not more than ₱1,000,000.00; suspension of business permit until compliance.
- d. Subsequent Offenses – Revocation of business permit or accreditation, without prejudice to civil or criminal liability under existing laws.

SECTION 46. PENALTIES FOR ACTS OF DISCRIMINATION. The following shall be imposed for acts of discrimination, to wit:

- a. Any owner, manager, or employee of an establishment who prevents, harasses, or discriminates against Muslims in the use of prayer rooms shall be liable to a fine of not less than ₱50,000.00 but not more than ₱200,000.00, and/or imprisonment of not less than one (1) month but not more than six (6) months, at the discretion of the court.
- b. If the violator is a corporation, partnership, or association, the penalty shall be imposed upon its responsible officers.

- c. This provision is without prejudice to the application of the Anti-Discrimination Ordinances passed by LGUs, the Magna Carta for Women (RA 9710), and other relevant laws.

SECTION 47. REMEDIES FOR AGGRIEVED INDIVIDUALS.

- a. Muslim employees, students, or patrons who are denied access to prayer rooms may file complaints before:
 - 1. The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) – for workplace-related violations;
 - 2. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) – for commercial establishment-related violations;
 - 3. The Department of Education (DepEd) or Commission on Higher Education (CHED) – for school-related violations;
 - 4. The Department of Health (DOH) – for hospital-related violations;
 - 5. The National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) – for cultural and religious accommodation violations.
- b. The filing of a complaint under this section shall not preclude the aggrieved party from pursuing remedies under the Civil Code, the Labor Code, the Revised Penal Code, or other special laws, as the case may be.

SECTION 48. WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION. Employees, students, or patrons who report violations of this Act shall be protected from retaliation under the Whistleblower Protection Act, and establishments found retaliating shall be subject to additional penalties, including suspension of permits.

SECTION 49. ESCALATING SANCTIONS. For establishments demonstrating persistent refusal to comply after three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act, the following measures may be imposed:

- a. Blacklisting from government contracts and procurement opportunities;
- b. Denial of permits for expansion, renovation, or renewal of business operations;
- c. Public disclosure of non-compliance status on government websites and advisories.

SECTION 50. COMMUNITY-BASED MONITORING OF PENALTIES. The NCMF, in coordination with civil society organizations, Muslim associations, and religious leaders, shall establish a community-based monitoring system to document cases of non-compliance or discrimination and recommend sanctions to the appropriate government agencies.

CHAPTER VI

MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

SECTION 51. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS (IRR). Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the following agencies shall, in consultation with Muslim organizations, religious scholars, business associations, and civil society groups, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for its implementation:

1. Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE);
2. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI);
3. Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH);
4. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG);
5. Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
6. Department of Health (DOH); and
7. National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).

The IRR shall include detailed standards on the construction, maintenance, operation, and inspection of prayer rooms, as well as procedures for complaints, penalties, and appeals.

The IRR shall also provide guidance on exemptions, subsidies, and the phasing-in of requirements for establishments with structural limitations.

SECTION 52. TRANSITION AND COMPLIANCE PERIOD. Covered establishments existing at the time of the effectivity of the IRR of this Act shall be given a transition period of:

- a. Four (4) months – For large-scale establishments such as malls, airports, seaports, universities, hospitals, and government buildings;
- b. Three (3) months – For medium-scale establishments such as factories, transport terminals, and secondary schools; and
- c. Two (2) months – For small-scale establishments that fall within the coverage thresholds.

Establishments constructed or substantially renovated after the effectivity of this Act shall immediately integrate prayer rooms into their building designs.

SECTION 53. NON-REDUCTION OF BENEFITS. Nothing in this Act shall be construed to diminish, impair, or remove any rights or benefits already enjoyed by Muslims under existing laws, customs, or policies. Instead, this Act shall be deemed a supplementary measure to enhance religious freedom.

SECTION 54. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 55. REPEALING CLAUSE. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 56. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.