



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 11321



Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is a diverse nation composed of people belonging to different religions, denominations, and belief systems. The Constitution protects the freedom of religion and guarantees the free exercise thereof.

Despite this constitutional protection, many Filipinos who are away from their homes, places of worship, or communities may have limited access to an appropriate and peaceful space for prayer, reflection, meditation, or quiet contemplation while transacting business or accessing services in public offices and other public places.

This measure seeks to promote inclusivity and respect for religious diversity by providing for the establishment or designation of **Multi-Faith Prayer and Quiet Rooms (MFPQRs)** in government offices and encouraging their establishment in public-facing establishments.

The proposed MFPQRs are intended to be neutral spaces that may be used by persons of different faiths, as well as individuals who simply need a quiet place for reflection. The measure does not promote or favor any particular religion. Rather, it seeks to provide reasonable accommodation while upholding the constitutional principles of religious freedom, non-discrimination, and inclusivity.

The measure also provides practical standards for these facilities, including cleanliness, adequate lighting and ventilation, appropriate flooring, signage, flexible spaces, and, when practicable, an accessible ablution area. It recognizes, however, that the availability of space and resources may vary among government offices and establishments.

For local governments, the bill provides that the voluntary establishment and maintenance of MFPQRs may be recognized as a non-obligatory indicator under the Seal of Good Local Governance. It also allows MFPQR-related projects to be considered among eligible projects under the Local Government Support Fund, subject to existing budgetary rules.

Ultimately, this measure seeks to promote a more respectful, inclusive, and accommodating public environment where every Filipino, regardless of faith or belief, may have a safe and peaceful space for prayer, reflection, or quiet contemplation.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ

Representative

Lone District, Calamba City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 11321

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR MULTI-FAITH PRAYER AND QUIET ROOMS IN PUBLIC OFFICES
AND PUBLIC-FACING ESTABLISHMENTS

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 “**Multi-Faith Prayer and Quiet Rooms Act (MFPQR)**”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. It is the policy of the State to uphold and protect the freedom of religion and the free exercise thereof as guaranteed by the Constitution. The State recognizes that individuals of different faiths and beliefs may need a safe, peaceful, and accessible space for prayer, reflection, meditation, or quiet contemplation while performing their daily activities in public offices and public-facing establishments.

Consistent with the principles of religious freedom, inclusivity, non-discrimination, and respect for diversity, the State shall promote reasonable accommodation for persons of different religious beliefs and those who may simply need a quiet space for reflection or personal contemplation.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act:

- (a) **Government Offices** refer to central and regional offices of the national government, constitutional bodies, government-owned or -controlled corporations, government financial institutions, state universities and colleges, and local government units, including their respective offices and facilities;
- (b) **Multi-Faith Prayer and Quiet Room (MFPQR)** refers to a designated, neutral, accessible, and inclusive space intended for prayer, religious observance, meditation, reflection, or quiet contemplation, which may be used by persons regardless of religious affiliation or belief;
- (c) **Public-Facing Establishments** refer to establishments or facilities that are regularly accessible to and frequented by members of the public, including airports, seaports, hospitals, malls, transportation hubs, and similar establishments, as may be identified in the implementing rules and regulations; and
- (d) **Ablution Area** refers to a designated facility for cleansing and preparatory practices associated with religious observance, which shall be gender-sensitive, accessible, clean, and located within close proximity to the MFPQR when practicable.

SEC. 4. Establishment of Multi-Faith Prayer and Quiet Rooms. All covered government offices shall establish or designate an MFPQR within their premises, subject to the availability of space and funds and taking into consideration the nature, size, and physical configuration of the office or facility.

Public-facing establishments are likewise encouraged to establish or designate MFPQRs, subject to their available space, resources, and existing operational requirements.

The establishment and use of an MFPQR shall be undertaken in a manner that respects religious freedom and shall not favor, promote, or discriminate against any particular religion, denomination, or belief system.

SEC. 5. Design and Facility Requirements. The MFPQR shall, as far as practicable, comply with the following minimum requirements:

- (a) Clean and appropriate flooring suitable for sitting, kneeling, or standing;
- (b) A shoe rack or designated area for footwear;
- (c) Adequate lighting and ventilation;
- (d) Multilingual signage indicating the MFPQR and displaying the internationally recognized “quiet room” symbol;
- (e) An ablution area for cleansing and preparatory practices that is gender-sensitive, accessible, and within close proximity to the MFPQR, equipped, when practicable, with low faucets, bidet, or foot-washing basins;
- (f) Where practicable, movable partitions or other flexible arrangements to accommodate different forms of prayer, reflection, meditation, sitting, kneeling, or standing; and
- (g) Such other reasonable features as may be provided in the implementing rules and regulations.

The ablution area may be located in a comfort room adjacent to or in close proximity to the MFPQR.

In no case shall an MFPQR be established or designated within a smoking area or as a comfort room.

The design and requirements under this Section shall be implemented with due regard to the availability of space, existing facilities, and the reasonable capacity of the covered office or establishment.

SEC. 6. Incentive-Based Integration in the Seal of Good Local Governance. The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) shall integrate the voluntary establishment and maintenance of an MFPQR by local government units (LGUs) as a non-obligatory criteria indicator under the Seal of Good Local Governance (SGLG) or its successor assessment framework.

Compliance with this indicator shall not be mandatory, and non-compliance shall neither disqualify nor demerit an LGU from obtaining or retaining the Seal.

However, LGUs that voluntarily establish and maintain MFPQRs in accordance with this Act and its implementing rules and regulations may be awarded additional incentive points, merits, or other equivalent recognitions or scoring credits, as may be determined by the DILG.

The DILG shall promulgate the necessary guidelines to operationalize this incentive-based indicator, including criteria for assessment, documentation requirements, point allocation, and verification mechanisms, ensuring that implementation remains voluntary, non-discriminatory, and consistent with the principles of local autonomy and inclusivity.

SEC. 7. Local Government Support Fund Eligibility. The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) shall include the establishment, construction, retrofitting, or improvement of MFPQRs in the menu of eligible projects that may be financed under the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF), subject to the rules, guidelines, and policies issued by the DBM on budgeting, programming, prioritization, and fund utilization.

SEC. 8. Voluntary Establishment by Public-Facing Establishments. Public-facing establishments that are not mandatorily covered under this Act may voluntarily establish or designate MFPQRs in accordance with the standards and guidelines prescribed under this Act.

Such establishments may apply for recognition as “**All-Religion Friendly**” establishments, subject to the accreditation or recognition system that may be established by the appropriate government agencies.

SEC. 9. Government Recognition and Incentives. Public-facing establishments that voluntarily establish and maintain MFPQRs in accordance with this Act may be eligible for:

- (a) Inclusion in appropriate promotional programs of the Department of Tourism (DOT) and other concerned government agencies;
- (b) Access to technical assistance or recognition awards from appropriate government agencies; and
- (c) Priority endorsement, where appropriate, for participation in government fairs, expositions, tourism promotions, and similar programs.

Nothing in this Section shall be construed as granting a preference to any religion or religious organization.

SEC. 10. Responsibilities of Government Agencies. The DILG, DBM, DOT, and other concerned government agencies shall coordinate in the implementation of this Act.

The DILG shall assist LGUs in the implementation of Sections 6 and 7 of this Act.

The DBM shall issue the necessary budgetary guidelines for projects involving the establishment, construction, retrofitting, or improvement of MFPQRs.

The DOT may incorporate compliant establishments into appropriate tourism and promotional programs, particularly those designed to promote inclusive and accessible tourism.

Other government agencies shall provide such technical assistance and support as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DILG, in coordination with the DBM, DOT, and other concerned government agencies, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

The implementing rules and regulations shall provide, among others, the standards for the establishment, design, accessibility, maintenance, use, recognition, and monitoring of MFPQRs, taking into consideration the size, nature, available space, and resources of the covered office or establishment.

The implementing rules and regulations shall ensure that the implementation of this Act remains consistent with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of religion and the principle of non-discrimination.

SEC. 12. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the concerned government agencies, subject to existing budgeting, accounting, and auditing laws, rules, and regulations.

Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 13. 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.

SEC. 14. Repealing Clause. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved.