

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS**  
**First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 3555



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**Introduced by AKBAYAN Representative Tomasito S. Villarin**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The correctness of, and pressing need for, passing a comprehensive “anti-discrimination law” has already been sufficiently explained by many advocates in the House of Representatives who are championing the passage of such a law during previous Congresses. In various versions of the legislative proposal in the issue, proponents succinctly summarize the current predicament that the proposed law seeks to correct – i.e., that the existence of numerous national laws and international agreements notwithstanding, reality, at least when it comes to the effective application of said laws and strict adherence to said agreements, still leaves very much to be desired. As a result, many of our countrymen who happen to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) persons continue to experience oppression in their everyday lives – from their work places to their own homes, from inside schools to outside in the streets – simply because of long-held misconceptions and ignorance.

That this oppression is also perpetrated by those very same institutions that were created to protect and nurture our people makes the situation doubly tragic. The examples of discrimination seen in schools, churches, local governments, and in the police and military, for example, greatly limit the exercise and enjoyment of basic human rights and fundamental freedoms of so many people today. There is, therefore, an urgent need to define and penalize practices that unjustly discriminate against LGBT people.

On Akbayan’s part, given its affinity for the sectors and attendant issues of labor, rural development, agrarian reform, fisheries development and local governance, the Party attaches a special emphasis on the negative effects of discrimination, in all its forms, on these sectors. In particular, the adverse effects of discrimination, overt or otherwise, on the human resource pool, upon which the continued development of the said sectors relies, is very much worrying.

Why should any individual, or group of individuals, be singled out because of their sexual orientation or gender identity or gender expression and denied employment opportunities in their chosen fields? And why deny

these sectors the human resources they sorely need just because of personal biases held by the gatekeepers? Seen from this angle, the issue of discrimination ceases to be just a personal rights matter and becomes an economic/employment issue as well.

Congress must now act swiftly to address this unconscionable acts of discrimination not only to penalize such acts, but more importantly to educate society such invalid discrimination and prejudice of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people is anachronism of a bygone era, and has no place in modern society.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tomasito S. Villarin', with a stylized, cursive script.

**TOMASITO S. VILLARIN**

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**AN ACT**  
**PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION ON THE BASIS OF SEXUAL**  
**ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY (SOGI) AND PROVIDING PENALTIES**  
**THEREFOR**

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

**SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known and cited as the “*Anti-Discrimination Act.*”

**SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – The State recognizes the fundamental right of every person, regardless of sex, age, class, status, ethnicity, color, disability, religious and political beliefs, sexual orientation or gender identity, to be free from any form of discrimination. It shall therefore intensify its efforts to fulfill its duties under international and domestic laws to respect, protect and fulfill the rights and dignity of every individual.

Towards this end, the State shall exert efforts to address all forms of discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity and to promote human dignity as enshrined in the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, particularly the General Recommendation No. 28 on Non-discrimination Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, Convention on the Rights of the Child, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and all other relevant and universally accepted

human rights instruments and other international conventions to which the Philippines is a signatory of.

**SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. *Discrimination* refers to any distinction, exclusion, restriction, or preference which is based on any ground such as sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, and which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, access to, enjoyment, or exercise by all persons on an equal footing of all rights and freedoms. For purposes of this provision, the actual sex, sexual orientation or gender identity of the person subjected to discrimination shall not be relevant for the purpose of determining whether an act of discrimination has been committed.
- b. *Gender Identity* refers to the personal sense of identity as characterized, among others, by manner of clothing, inclinations, and behavior in relation to masculine or feminine conventions. A person may have a male or female identity with the physiological characteristics of the opposite sex.
- c. *Sexual Orientation* refers to the direction of emotional sexual attraction or conduct. This can be towards people of the same sex (homosexual orientation) or towards people of both sexes (bisexual orientation) or towards people of the opposite sex (heterosexual orientation).

**SEC. 4. Discriminatory Practices.** – It shall be unlawful for any person, natural or juridical, to:

- a. Include sexual orientation or gender identity, as well as the disclosure of sexual orientation, in the criteria for hiring, promotion, transfer, designation, work assignment, re-assignment, dismissal of workers, and other human resource movement and action, performance review and in the determination of employee compensation, career development opportunities, training, and other learning and development interventions, incentives, privileges, benefits or allowances, and other terms and conditions of employment: *Provided That*, this provision shall apply to employment in both the private sector and public service, including military, police and other similar services: *Provided, Further That* this prohibition shall likewise apply to the contracting and engaging of the services of juridical persons;

- b. Refuse admission or expel a person from any educational or training institution on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity: *Provided, However That* the right of educational and training institutions to determine the academic qualifications of their students or trainees shall be duly upheld;
- c. Impose disciplinary sanctions, penalties harsher than customary or similar punishments, requirements, restrictions, or prohibitions that infringe on the rights of the students on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity, including discriminating against a student or trainee due to the sexual orientation or gender identity of the student's parents or legal guardian;
- d. Refuse or revoke the accreditation, formal recognition, registration or plan to organize of any organization, group, political party, institution or establishment, in educational institutions, workplaces, communities, and other settings, solely on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity of their members or of their target constituencies;
- e. Deny a person access to public or private medical and other health services open to the general public on the basis of such person's sexual orientation or gender identity;
- f. Deny an application for or revoke a professional or other similar kind of license, clearance certification or any other similar document issued by the government due to the applicant's sexual orientation or gender identity;
- g. Deny a person access to or the use of establishments, facilities, utilities or services, including housing, open to the general public on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity: *Provided, That* the act of giving inferior accommodations or services shall be considered a denial of access or use of such facility or service: *Provided, That* this prohibition covers acts of discrimination against juridical persons solely on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity of their members or of their target constituencies;
- h. Subject or force any person to undertake any medical or psychological examination to determine and/or alter the person's sexual orientation or gender identity without the expressed approval of the person involved, except in cases where the person involved is a minor and below the age of discernment in which case prior approval of the appropriate Family Court shall be required. In the latter case, the child shall be represented in the proceedings by the Solicitor General or the latter's authorized representative; and



- i. Harassment by members of institutions involved in the enforcement of law and the protection of rights of any person on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Among other cases, harassment occurs when a person is arrested or otherwise placed in the custody and subjected to extortion, physical or verbal abuse, regardless of whether such arrest has legal or factual basis. Harassment of juridical persons on the basis of the sexual orientation or gender identity of their members, stockholders, benefactors, clients, or patrons is likewise covered by this provision.

**SEC. 5. *Administrative Sanctions.*** – Willful refusal of a government official whose duty is to investigate, prosecute, or otherwise act on a complaint for a violation of this Act to perform such a duty without a valid ground shall constitute gross negligence on the part of the official.

**SEC. 6. *Penalties.*** – Any person who commits any discriminatory practice described in Section 4 shall, upon conviction, be penalized by a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000) but not more than Five hundred thousand pesos (P500,000) or imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than six (6) years, at the discretion of the court. In addition, the court may impose upon a person found to have committed any of the prohibited acts the rendition of community service in terms of attendance in human rights education's familiarization with and exposure to the plight of the victims.

If a graver offense motivated by bias, prejudice, or hatred against sexual orientation or gender identity is committed, such shall be meted the corresponding maximum penalties depending on the severity of the offenses.

Any action arising from the violation of the provisions of this Act shall prescribe in three (3) years.

Nothing in this Act shall preclude the victim from instituting a separate and independent action for damages and other affirmative reliefs.

The penalties provided under this Section shall be without prejudice to administrative liability for government officials and employees.

**SEC. 7. *Inclusion of SOGI Concerns in All Police Stations.*** – The Women and Children's Desks now existing in all police stations, shall also act on and attend to complaints/cases covered by this Act. In this regard, police handling said desks shall undergo appropriate trainings with human rights-based approach to include among others gender sensitivity and awareness in proper terminology, dynamics of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) relationships and hate crime investigations.

Complainant-minors can be represented by parents, guardians or a non-government organization of good standing and reputation.

**SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

**SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,