

Introduced by Senator Juan Miguel F. Zubiri

RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE PROFOUND SYMPATHY AND CONDOLENCES OF THE SENATE  
ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE SANTANINA TILLAH RASUL, MEMBER  
OF THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES DURING THE EIGHTH AND NINTH  
CONGRESSES

**WHEREAS**, the Honorable Santanina Tillah Rasul, the first woman of Muslim faith to be elected into the Senate and a renowned advocate of peace, education, and women empowerment, passed away on 28 November 2024, at the age of 94;

**WHEREAS**, born on 14 September 1930, in Siasi, Sulu, the young Santanina—or Nina, as she was called—showed an incredible aptitude for academics early on, graduating as valedictorian at the Laum Tabawan Elementary School in 1941 and first honor at Sulu High School in 1948, and eventually obtaining Cum Laude honors for her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science degree from the University of the Philippines in 1952 and obtaining her Master's Degree in National Security Administration from the National Defense College of the Philippines in 1976;

**WHEREAS**, a passionate educator, Senator Rasul first entered government service as a public school teacher in Siasi and then in Jolo, Sulu, from 1952 to 1957, before she pursued and won a seat as barrio councilor of Moore Avenue, Jolo, Sulu for two terms, from 1960 to 1963, and then as a member of the Provincial Board of Sulu from 1971 to 1976;

**WHEREAS**, in 1964, Senator Rasul served as technical assistant to the Office of the President of the Philippines, and went on to hold various government positions, such as the Commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women and a Board Member of the former Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports;

**WHEREAS**, her legislative career spanned two consecutive terms, first from 1987 to 1992 and then again from 1992 to 1995, making Senator Rasul not only the first woman of the Muslim faith to serve as a Senator, but also the first Muslim Senator to be reelected into the Senate, cementing her as a pioneering political figure for Muslim Filipinos across the country;

**WHEREAS**, across her two terms in the Senate, Senator Rasul spearheaded groundbreaking legislation that ensured gender equality and women empowerment, foremost among these being Republic Act No. 6949, declaring March 8 as National Women's Day, and Republic Act No. 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation-Building Act of 1992, which opened avenues for women to enter and excel in previously inaccessible spaces, such as military schools, and mandated the annual allocation of the Gender Development Budget in all government offices;

**WHEREAS,** beyond her work in legislation, Senator Rasul worked hard to promote education and literacy through personal initiatives, and during the International Literacy Year in 1990, she was appointed a UNESCO Honorary Ambassador in recognition of her life's work to promote literacy as a way to uplift underserved communities, in response to the poor literacy rates in her home province of Sulu—a statistic that pushed the former educator to develop a phono-syllabic pedagogical program that eventually became the basis for her Magbassa Kita Foundation, Inc., a foundation dedicated to reducing illiteracy among adults, especially in underdeveloped areas in Muslim Mindanao;

**WHEREAS,** a proud daughter of Mindanao, Senator Rasul championed the peace process in the region through her work as an adviser to the Philippine Center for Islam and Democracy and her work with Cardinal Orlando Quevedo's Friends of Peace, a council of key leaders that pushed for peace negotiations to end the conflict in Muslim Mindanao;

**WHEREAS,** for her impactful work in legislation and for her lifelong commitment to creating better conditions for the Filipino people, particularly through programs that promote gender equality, literacy, and lasting peace, Senator Rasul deserves the highest commendation and gratitude from the Senate and the entire country.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** as it is hereby resolved by the Senate to express its profound sympathy and condolences on the passing of the Honorable Santanina Tillah Rasul, member of the Senate of the Philippines during the Eighth and Ninth Congresses.

**Adopted,**



**JUAN MIGUEL F. ZUBIRI**