

SENATE
S.B. No. 2117

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Introduced by: Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

**AN ACT
REQUIRING THE USE OF FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE INSETS FOR LOCAL NEWS PROGRAMS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 22 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277, AS AMENDED,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs)"**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In a truly inclusive society, the welfare of the poor and the marginalized are always upheld, and nobody gets left behind in the push for development.

In the same vein, a society that values transparency must always ensure that information transmitted through mass media is made accessible especially to the more vulnerable sectors of society, especially persons with disabilities (PWDs) and those with hearing impairments.

This bill seeks to require the broadcast of television programs and showing of motion pictures and other audio-visual presentation with "closed captions" (CC), and providing penalties of violation thereof to respond to the needs of hearing-impaired individuals.

"Closed captioning", as defined by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) of the United States government, "allows persons with hearing disabilities to have access to television programming by displaying the audio portion of a television program as text on the television screen."¹

Moreover, the FCC website states that closed captioning "provides a critical link to news, entertainment and information for [the hearing-impaired]... Captions also help improve literacy skills."

Data from the World Health Organization (WHO) states: "The prevalence of disabling hearing loss in children is greatest in South Asia, Asia Pacific and Sub-Saharan Africa," with the Asia Pacific as the region with the second highest incidence next to South Asia. Moreover, "In children, prevalence decreases exponentially as gross national income per capita (GNI) increases," and "in most regions, prevalence in children decreases linearly as parent's literacy rate increases." Meanwhile, "in adults of 65 years and older, prevalence decreases exponentially as income increases."²

¹ Federal Communications Commission website, United States government. <http://www.fcc.gov/guides/closed-captioning>. Last accessed on February 5, 2014.

² World Health Organization. "WHO global estimates on prevalence of hearing loss." Mortality and Burden of Diseases and Prevention of Blindness and Deafness Conference, 2012. http://www.who.int/pbd/deafness/WHO_GE_HL.pdf. Last accessed on February 5, 2014.

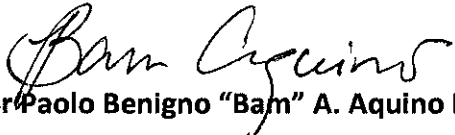
This means that a poor individuals that are either deaf, mute or hard of hearing have a lesser chance of accessing information through mass media.

In the Philippines, 1.23% of the entire population is either deaf, mute, or hearing-impaired. As of 2009, the projected deaf population is already at 241,624 for those who are totally deaf, and 275,912 for those who are partially deaf. That means that at least 517,536 people currently have very limited access to media and information because of their hearing impairedness.

We firmly believe that, as the late great President Ramon Magsaysay had said, "those who have less in life should have more in law." Therefore, this bill seeks to provide to hearing-impaired Filipinos a luxury which many of us take for granted.

By making closed captioning compulsory for all franchise holders of operators of television stations, producers of television programs, home video programs, and motion pictures, we seek to open access to information, learning, and entertainment to Filipinos who are currently denied this basic right.

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


Senator Paolo Benigno "Bam" A. Aquino IV

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC)
OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

14 FEB 11 P3:00

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PROGRAMS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 22 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7277,
AS AMENDED, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "MAGNA CARTA FOR PERSONS WITH
DISABILITIES (PWDs)"

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

1 **SECTION 1.** This Act shall be known as "*The Filipino Sign Language Act in Broadcast*
2 *Media of 2014*"

3 **SECTION 2.** Section 22 of Republic Act No. 7277, as amended, otherwise known as the
4 "*Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs)*", is hereby further amended to read
5 as follows:

6 SEC. 22. *Broadcast Media.* - ALL FREE-TO-AIR television stations [shall
7 be encouraged] ARE REQUIRED to provide [a] FILIPINO sign language insets,
8 and WHERE POSSIBLE, CLOSED CAPTIONS or subtitles in at least [one (1)] TWO
9 (2) newscast programs a day and special programs covering events of national
10 significance.

11 THE FREE-TO-AIR TELEVISION MAY LIKEWISE OPT TO PROVIDE FOR
12 FILIPINO SIGN LANGUAGE INSETS IN OTHER PROGRAMS SUCH AS THOSE
13 PERTAINING TO CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIVELIHOOD AND THOSE CATERING TO
14 CHILDREN.

15 **Sec. 2. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, decrees, letters of instruction, resolutions, orders,
16 ordinances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
17 hereby repealed, amended or modify accordingly.

18 **SEC. 3. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete
19 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

20 Approved,