

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

7 JUL -2 10:38

RECEIVED BY: 

SENATE

S. B. No. 349

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Introduced by **Senator JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Every democratic nation today recognizes the value of freedom of the press. The recognition and respect for this freedom is the very essence of democracy. Uncensored public discussion is a necessary condition in a society enjoying the bounty of a free and democratic State. Hence, freedom of the press is founded on the assumption that the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse, and perhaps even "antagonistic" sources is essential for the enhancement and projection of the welfare and interest of the people. Indeed, government can be responsive to the will of the people only when free debate and unhampered exchange of ideas become the hallmark of the State.

In the Philippines, freedom of the press is a right protected by no less than the Constitution. At the very core of the right is the liberty to discuss publicly and truthfully all matters of public interest without prior censorship or subsequent punishment. It signifies the freedom of a person to communicate with other members of the body politic.

It was in this liberal spirit that the Legislature enacted Republic Act No. 53 in 1946. The Act exempted the publisher, editor, columnist, or duly accredited reporter of any newspaper, magazine or periodical of general circulation from being compelled to reveal the source of any news report or information appearing in said publication which was related in confidence to such publisher, editor or reporter, unless the court or a House or committee of Congress finds that such revelation is demanded by the security of the State.

As in the case of anything good, Republic Act No. 53 had already outgrown its usefulness, so to speak. It would have been a very good law if only it anticipated the growth and development of mass media. Unfortunately, only members of the print media are covered under its provisions.


It is beyond doubt that included within the concept of the "press" are such vehicles of communications as radio, television and printed publications. Republic Act No. 53, therefore, failed to cope with the exigencies of modernization. In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
JINGGOY EJERCITO ESTRADA  
Senator

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**AN ACT**

**FURTHER AMENDING SECTION ONE OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 53,  
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT TO EXEMPT THE PUBLISHER, EDITOR,  
COLUMNIST OR REPORTER OF ANY PUBLICATION FROM REVEALING  
THE SOURCE OF PUBLISHED NEWS OR INFORMATION OBTAINED IN  
CONFIDENCE**

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

**SECTION 1.** - Section One of Republic Act No. 53 is further amended to  
read as follows:

"SECTION 1. Without prejudice to his liability under the civil and criminal  
laws, the publisher, editor, columnist, or duly accredited reporter of any  
newspaper, magazine or periodical of general circulation and the manager  
or duly accredited reporter or newscaster of any radio or television station,  
network or facility, cannot be compelled to reveal the source of any news  
report or information appearing in said publication or emanating from said  
radio or television station, network or facility which was related in  
confidence to such publisher, editor or reporter unless the court or a  
House or Committee of Congress finds that such revelation is demanded  
by the security of the State."

**SEC. 2. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect immediately upon its  
approval,

*Approved,*