

567

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 567



Introduced by Honorable ROILO GOLEZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The existing national telephone program of the government, basically harnessing outdated landline technology, cannot provide within the foreseeable future a telephone system that will reach and cover virtually every town, every barrio and every home in the archipelago. A landline system entails a most cumbersome process of installing physical infrastructure such as telephone poles, lines, aboveground or underground cables, exchanges, telephone apparati and, and of course, very expensive rights of way.

The country must leapfrog that outdated landline telephone system and immediately go into cellular and wireless telephones, by acquiring access to satellites and setting up a network of cell sites spanning the entire archipelago.

With cellular and wireless phones, it is possible – in just a few minutes - to have a telephone system where a farmer or a fishpond operator, or even fishermen near the coastline to call home and rest of the Philippines and the world, by becoming subscribers of cellular phones whose rates are sharply declining because of the interplay of competition and technology. By broadening the subscriber base to the countryside, the Philippines will be one step closer to having a truly democratized communications system.

This would also give rise to a new breed of telephone entrepreneurs, i.e., those who can afford to be cellular phone subscribers shall offer and retail such phone services to the general public. Those folks in very remote areas would then have access to telephones, within walking distance, should they need to call a relative in the cities or a spouse, father or mother working as an OCW in various parts of the world, by direct dial and without the intervention of human operators.

It is a must that the Philippines leapfrog in the future if we are to integrate the entire nation and make all Filipinos, wherever they are, part of the New Millennium through the Miracle of Cellular and Wireless Telephones.

Passage of this bill is earnestly urged.


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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL CELLULAR AND
WIRELESS TELEPHONE PROGRAM

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known and cited as the "National Cellular and Wireless Telephone Act of 2004."

SEC 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It shall be the policy of the Senate to accelerate and promote the establishment of a modern, state-of-the-art, world-class telephone system that shall reach and cover every municipality and barangay of the Philippines within the shortest possible time at reasonable rates.

SEC. 3. *National Cellular and Wireless Telephone Program.*
The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) shall implement a five year National Cellular and Wireless Telephone Program as provided for in this Act, using a combination of government and private investments in an environment of free competition and mandatory interconnection. All landline telephone programs of the government are hereby accordingly revised and appropriations therefor, as well as contracts under negotiation, shall be reprogrammed and redirected towards the enforcement of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, ordinances, or parts thereof, inconsistent herewith are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 5. *Separability Clause.* If any part or provision of this Act shall be held unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in at least (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved,