Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

First Regular Session

House Bill No. 719

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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Introduced by **REP. JUDY J. SYJUCO**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Pursuant to the constitutional mandate that the State shall by law facilitate the establishment of adequate consultation mechanisms, and in the spirit of the same Constitution which has institutionalized people power by granting them the right to participate in all levels of political decision making, this bill seeks to encourage the citizens of our country to communicate their views and opinions and facilitate prompt and immediate response to a public need. Further, this bill recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation building as mandated in the Constitution.

To achieve this in the most expeditious and inexpensive manner, the franking privilege must be extended to Filipino citizens here and abroad, to enable them to communicate their views and opinions regarding issues pertaining to their concerns, whether local or national.

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

JUDY J. SYJUCO

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Introduced by **REP. JUDY J. SYJUCO**

AN ACT
GRANTING FRANKING PRIVILEGE TO FILIPINO CITIZENS HERE AND ABROAD, TO ENHANCE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN THE TASK OF GOVERNANCE.

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Filipino Citizens' Franking Privilege Act of 2004."

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to encourage Filipino citizens here and abroad to participate actively in the task of governance and to instill in them the duty of responsible citizenship through constant communication, enabling them to express freely their views, opinions, and grievances to the duly constituted authorities, thus enhancing transparency in governmental affairs. The Government, in return, shall act and respond to the needs of the people expeditiously and within the shortest possible time.

SECTION 3. *Franking Privilege.* – All Filipino citizens here and abroad and of legal age are hereby granted franking privilege when addressing correspondence to any of the three (3) branches of government. The head of any such branch shall ensure that such correspondence shall be answered in writing fifteen (15) days, stating therein any action taken for the information of its sender. If within thirty (30) days, no answer has been received, the sender may send a follow-up letter requesting for such a response. If no answer is received within ninety (90) days from receipt of its follow-up letter, the responsible official shall be liable for violation of Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and employees if the sender decides to file a formal complaint against him.

All mail matter of the Filipino citizens from here and abroad shall be received, transmitted, and delivered in the mail free of postage; provided that the mail matter shall be sent by ordinary mail only; and provided further that said mail shall be addressed to any head of the three (3) branches of government.

SECTION 4. *Implementation.* – The Postmaster- General of the Philippine Postal Corporation (Philpost) shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to implement effectively the provisions of this Act. Further, the postmaster or his subordinates have the right to refuse the receipt, transmittal, or delivery of the mail sought to be franked when not in accordance with this Act.

SECTION 5. *Penalty.* – Unauthorized use of the Filipino Citizens' Franking Privilege shall be penalized by a fine of One Thousand Pesos (P1, 000.00).

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, and issuances that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby deemed repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after completion of its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,