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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1515



INTRODUCED BY HON. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

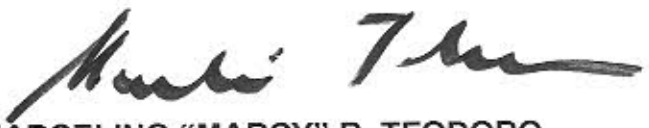
EXPLANATORY NOTE

This measure seeks to make our country's national telecommunication system accessible to the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired.

The State categorically recognizes the importance of the persons with disabilities (PWDs) sector. For instance, the Constitution provides sectoral representation for the disabled in the House of Representatives. Likewise, the State established the National Commission for Disabled Persons to guarantee that the rights of the handicapped are protected, and all programs and services of the government are universally accessible to all segments of society.

Although recent technology already incorporates and considers the need of handicapped persons when creating products, communication facilities in the Philippines remain inadequate for the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired.

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


MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO
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AN ACT
PROVIDING HEARING-IMPAIRED AND SPEECH-IMPAIRED PERSONS
ACCESS TO THE TELECOMMUNICATION SYSTEM

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Telecommunication Accessibility Enhancement Act of 2013."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to provide handicapped persons protection and assistance to hasten their integration into the mainstream of society.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

- A) "TDD" or Telecommunication Devices for the Deaf means a machine which employs graphic communications in the transmission of coded signals through the nationwide telecommunication system.
- B) "Secretary" means the Secretary of Transportation and Communications.

SEC. 4. *National Telecommunications System Requirements.* –

(A) Accessibility of the telecommunications system. – The Department of Transportation and Communications and the effective government agencies shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to assure that the national telecommunication system is fully accessible to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

(B) Specific requirements. – In carrying out paragraph (A), the Secretary shall:

- 1) Provide for the establishment of a relay for users of TDDs.
- 2) Within ninety (90) days after the date of enactment of this Act, expand such relay system by employing at least one additional operator.
- 3) Within one hundred eighty (180) days after such date of enactment –
 - (a) Conduct, as part of the rule-making proceeding required by paragraph (A), an analysis of modification to the national telecommunication system that the Secretary, in his/her discretions, determines to be necessary to achieve the objectives of paragraph (A); and

- (b) Submit report on the result of such analysis to each House of the Congress.
- 4) Within one hundred eighty (180) days after completion of such analysis, prescribe the regulations required by paragraph (A);
 - 5) Assemble, publish and maintain a directory of TDDs and other devices used by national agencies to comply with such regulations, and publish in national agency directories, access numbers of TDDs and such other devices; and
 - 6) Adopt the design of a standard logo to signify the presence of a TDD or other device used by a national government agency to comply with such regulations.

SEC. 5. *Additional Requirements.* –

(A) Support for Research. – The Secretary shall seek to promote research by government agencies and private entities to reduce the cost and improve the capabilities of telecommunication devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

(B) Planning to Assimilate Technological Development. – The Secretary, in planning future alterations to and modifications of the national telecommunications system, shall take into account the result of the analysis required by Section 3 (B) 3 and technological improvements in the telecommunications devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

SEC. 6. *Inquiry Regarding Inter-Region TDD Relay System.* – The Department of Transportation and Communications within nine (9) months after the date of enactment of this Act, complete inquiry regarding an inter-state relay system for users of TDDs.

SEC. 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provisions or part hereof, is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly.

SEC. 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,