

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

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **2611**



Introduced by **BAYAN MUNA**
Representatives **NERI J. COLMENARES** and **CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE**

AN ACT
FOR AN ELDERLY AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED FRIENDLY
PHILIPPINE CURRENCY DESIGN,
AMENDING SECTION 53 OF REPUBLIC ACT No. 7653

EXPLANATORY NOTE

There are more than half a million blind people and many more who are visually impaired to a lesser degree in the Philippines according to the Resources for the Blind, Inc. Further, statistics reveal that about 100 children lose their sight every week. For the elderly, cataract is considered the leading cause of blindness.

It is the policy of the State to exert all efforts to remove all social, cultural, economic, environmental and attitudinal barriers that are discriminatory to differently abled persons. However, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and the President has failed to seriously consider the condition of the elderly and differently abled in designing our currency despite the fact that a growing number of our people are becoming visually impaired. Despite the huge number of visually impaired persons in the country, the different denominations of Philippine money are not easily distinguishable to the visually impaired especially those who were afflicted with blindness at a later age.

Although every banknote denomination differs in color, they still all have the same size and do not have any distinguishable feature (raised dots or markings, imprint, etc.) that can be recognized by the elderly or visually impaired. They oftentimes have to rely on other people to tell them how much they are receiving or giving which not only makes them vulnerable to fraud but also contribute to their disempowerment. This essentially denies them meaningful access to the use of the currency.

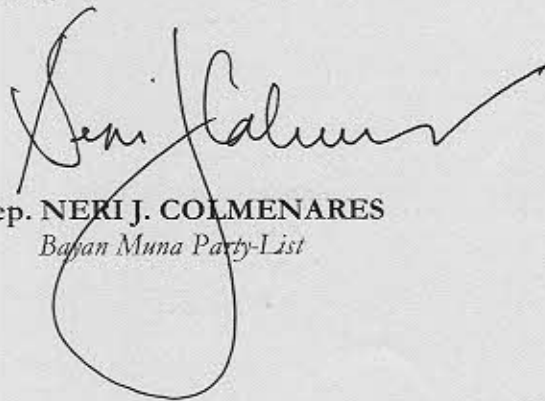
Under Sec. 53 of Republic Act No. 7653, it is stated that, "the Monetary Board, with the approval of the President of the Philippines, shall prescribe the denominations, dimensions, designs, inscriptions and other characteristics of notes issued by the Bangko Sentral ..."

In 2010, when this measure was first filed and through the intervention made by Bayan Muna, the BSP expressed to accommodate features that are blind friendly in the newly minted bills of 2011. But there was not a significant feature added to address the issue of the blind and the visually impaired section of our population. What made things worse is that the new bills made it difficult even for those with no visual problem; the colors used were only shades away from each bill that some people mistake P1000 for P100.00.

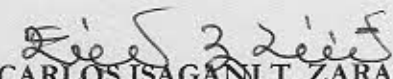
This bill requires the Monetary Board to take cognizance of the plight of the blind and the visually impaired in designing Philippine peso notes and coins. Raised dots signifying "100" or "500" for example, on the top left front side of a note that can be easily felt by touch and would differentiate it from other denominations would greatly help our elderly and the visually impaired. This bill further requires the Board to fix the colors of the bills into distinguishable bills even for those with good eyesight.

The immediate approval of this bill is therefore earnestly sought.

Approved,



Rep. NERI J. COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-List



Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
Bayan Muna Party-List

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

Section 1. Section 53 of the Republic Act No. 7653 of the Central Bank Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 53. *Characteristics of the Currency.* - The Monetary Board, with the approval of the President of the Philippines, shall prescribe the denominations, dimensions, designs, inscriptions and other characteristics of notes issued by the Bangko Sentral: Provided, however, That said notes shall state that they are liabilities of the Bangko Sentral and are fully guaranteed by the Government of the Republic of the Philippines. Said notes shall bear the signatures, in facsimile, of the President of the Philippines and of the Governor of the Bangko Sentral.

Similarly, the Monetary Board, with the approval of the President of the Philippines, shall prescribe the weight, fineness, designs, denominations and other characteristics of the coins issued by the Bangko Sentral. In the minting of coins, the Monetary Board shall give full consideration to the availability of suitable metals and to their relative prices and cost of minting.

ADDITIONALLY, ALL THESE NOTES SHALL BEAR FEATURES EASILY DISTINGUISHABLE TO THE ELDERLY AND THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED BY ENSURING THAT EACH CURRENCY DENOMINATION, WHETHER NOTES OR COINS, SHALL HAVE DIFFERENT SIZES OR DESIGNS AND THAT EACH NOTE SHALL HAVE RAISED DOTS OR MARKINGS TO SIGNIFY ITS DENOMINATION. THE MONETARY BOARD SHALL ALWAYS CONSIDER THE ELDERLY AND THE DIFFERENTLY ABLED WHEN DESIGNING NOTES AND COINS.

Section 2. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Section 3. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or section of this Act or the application thereof to any person or circumstance is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions or sections of this Act, and the application of such provision or section to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

Approved,