

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4902



Introduced by **HON. GUS S. TAMBUNTING**

AN ACT
REQUIRING THE USE OF PLAIN WRITING IN ALL GOVERNMENT DOCUMENTS
TO ENHANCE CITIZENS' ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT INFORMATION AND
SERVICES AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rationale of this proposed measure is to allow the public to easily understand government processes and services. As such this measure mandates government agencies to adopt plain writing or the use of a "clear, concise, and well-organized" manner of writing in all government documents issued to the public. This should enable the public to access government information and services more easily and efficiently.

To put it simply, this bill aims to allow a person reading a government-issued document to be able to find what they need, understand what they read, and do what they need the first time they read the document.

This should increase efficiency in government services, avoid the need for repetitive clarifications, reduce resources spent on enforcement, and reduce errors in government processes.

On behalf of the people of Parañaque City's Second District, and for the common good of the Filipino people, the approval of the said measure is earnestly sought.


REP. GUS S. TAMBUNTING
2nd District, Parañaque City

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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 “Plain Writing Act”.

Sec. 2. Objective. – The purpose of this Act is to improve the access to and effectiveness of government documents as presented to the public by promoting clear government communication that citizens can understand and use.

Sec. 3. Plain Writing in Public Service. – All government agencies are hereby mandated to adopt Plain Writing in all their communications and the implementation of their basic functions, mandates, and services.

"Plain Writing" shall refer to writing and preparations thereof that are clear, concise, well-organized, and follows other best practices appropriate to the subject or field and intended audience or constituents. Plain writing shall be used in the following documents but is not limited to:

- 3.1. Information about any government benefit or services;
- 3.2. Documents necessary for obtaining any government benefit or service or filing taxes;
- 3.3. Documents that explain to the public how to comply with a requirement the government agencies administer, enforce and provide;

Plain writing shall also cover letters, forms, instructions, notices, and publications.

The term "government agencies" as used in this Act shall mean all government departments, bureaus, divisions, attached agencies, and government-owned- and controlled corporations

Sec. 4. The Civil Service Commission. – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) shall oversee the implementation of this Act. It shall issue guidelines sixty (60) days after the approval of this Act:

A. Preparation for Implementation of Plain Writing Requirements

1. All government agencies must designate one (1) or more senior officials within the agency to be the point-person for the implementation of this Act;
2. Communicate the requirements of this Act to the employees of the agency;
3. Train employees of government agencies in Plain Writing;
4. Establish a process for overseeing the compliance of the agencies with the requirements of this Act.

B. Websites. All government agencies are mandated to adopt a system of Plain Writing on their websites or relevant portals.

The CSC shall be allowed to consult and partner with relevant academic institutions and/or organizations in the development and issuance of relevant guidelines.

Sec. 5. Report on compliance. – All government agencies are mandated to report and publish on their respective websites or publications a report on their agency's compliance with the requirements of this Act.

Sec. 6. Appropriations. – The amount of 10 million pesos (Php 10,000,000.00) is hereby appropriated for the implementation of this Act. Every year, the CSC shall be allotted the needed appropriation to implement the provisions of this Act.

Sec. 7. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation, whichever comes earlier.

Approved,