

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6314



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE EDWIN L. OLIVAREZ**

AN ACT MANDATING ALL BROADCASTING COMPANIES, INCLUDING CABLE TELEVISION SYSTEMS, TO CONDUCT GENDER-AND DISABILITY-AWARENESS AND SENSITIVITY TRAININGS AND SEMINARS FOR ALL ITS EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN CONTENT CREATION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The media is arguably the greatest purveyor of ideology. It plays a very significant and influential role in shaping the collective belief, behavior, and culture of the population that consumes the information and stories it provides. It is therefore important to ensure that the media knows how to relay appropriate and non-discriminatory messages, story morale, and core values in every program they create which will eventually be heard, seen, and followed the public.

For instance, the way the media depicts the role of men and women in our society can have a significant impact on the real lives of the members of an ordinary Filipino household. Put up a program that knowingly or unknowingly justifies or normalizes rape culture and victim blaming, domestic abuse, and toxic masculinity, among other discriminatory practices, and the undiscerning public, especially the children, will think that it is the right way of life when, in fact, men and women are supposed to be treated as equals albeit with differentiated needs in every aspect of life.

The same goes for radio and television programs that endlessly make fun of or degrade persons with disabilities. Particularly, we have witnessed people with mental disabilities as subject of ridicule and comedic relief over and over again in various Filipino movies or television series. By doing this, the media sways the public to think and believe that it is okay to laugh at persons with disabilities, instead of imparting to them the precious lesson that persons with disabilities deserve the same degree of respect and dignity as any other people without any impairment.

Laying this as the foundation it is important for members of the media, particularly of radio and television, to be gender and disability sensitive. From the birth of a concept for a possible script up to the airing of the program they have had in mind, it is important that the people working behind the content of the said

program are equipped with the proper knowledge and advocacy regarding gender equality and respect for persons with disabilities. Thus, this bill seeks to mandate all broadcasting companies operating in the Philippines to provide or conduct gender sensitivity and disability awareness and sensitivity trainings for all its employees regardless of their employment status, whether regular, project-based, or contractor, who are involved in the content creation of its regular programs including, but not limited to research, script or narrative writing, proof-reading, reporting, story covering, direction, acting, hosting, performing, and other roles that require appearance or being on-air on regular television and radio programs, respectively.

To be sure, the conduct of these trainings will not in any way limit the creative freedom or license of the people that constitute the media. After all, this Bill does not seek to police scripts or stop television and radio personalities from expressing themselves. This Bill hopes, however, that the gender and disability sensitivity trainings will help raise awareness and will substantially educate the persons working in radio and television on the issues and concerns of the marginalized sectors with much faith that whatever lesson they will imbibe from such trainings will change mindsets, open up discussions, improve research and script writing, and teach or influence hosts, anchors, reporters, and actors on how to properly deliver their messages and creative outputs without being discriminatory against any member of the vulnerable and marginalized sectors.

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


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

Section 1. Statement of Policy - it is hereby declared as policy of the State to promote, protect, and uphold the rights of the marginalized sectors such as women and children, members of the LGBT, and persons with disabilities, among other vulnerable groups.

Section 2. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

Gender and Development (GAD) - the development perspective and process that is participatory and empowering, equitable, sustainable, free from violence, respectful of human rights, supportive of self-determination and actualization of human potentials. It seeks to achieve gender equality as a fundamental value that should be reflected in development choices and contends that women are active agents of development not just passive recipients of development.

Gender Sensitivity Training – A learning activity usually done through lectures and interactive participation that aims to show how gender shapes the roles of women and men in society including their role in development and how it affects relations between them. It is given to trainees to heighten their awareness of gender issues and concerns and be willing and able to respond to them with ultimate aim of making them appreciate the principles of Gender Development and eventually become its advocate. The Training shall also describe basic gender-related concepts and identity how social institutions contribute to the perpetuation of gender issues and/or biases. The session also aims to differentiate sexual orientation, gender identities, and gender expressions, and appreciate the importance of SOGIESC (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, and Sex Characteristics) in the GAD work and advocacy, GAD training and seminars must always include lectures on existing, as well as recently enacted, laws, issuances, and international commitments regarding women and children.

Disability Awareness and Sensitivity Training – A learning activity usually done through lectures and interactive participation that aims to promote awareness, sensitivity, and advocacy to protect and uphold the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities. Disability awareness training aims to challenge attitudes and pre-conceived notion towards persons with disabilities among both those with and without a disability, and to increase understanding of disability issues. These trainings and seminars must always include lectures on existing as well as recently enacted laws, issuances, and international commitments regarding persons with disabilities.

Content Employees – For purpose of this Act, the term employees shall include all persons working for the media company such as, but not limited to, its regular employees, project-based workers, and contractors that contribute or take a role in the creation of content for regular programs that will be aired or televised for the consumption of the public. This shall include all person that contribute in the research, script or narrative writing, proof-reading, reporting, story covering, direction, acting, hosting, performing, and other roles that require appearance or being on-air on regular television and radio programs, respectively.

Section 3. Coverage. This law shall apply to all broadcasting companies operating in the Philippines by virtue of a franchise granted by the Congress of the Philippines.

Section. 4. Conduct of Gender- and Disability- Sensitivity Trainings and Seminars. All broadcasting companies operating in the Philippines shall or conduct gender sensitivity and disability awareness and sensitivity trainings for all its employees regardless of their employment status, whether regular, project-based, or contractor, who are involved whether in a major or minor role in the content-creation of its regular programs including, but not limited to, research, script or narrative writing, proof-reading, reporting, story covering, direction, acting, hosting, performing, and other roles the require appearance or being on-air on regular television and radio programs, respectively. It shall be the duty of the broadcast company to ensure that all persons involved in the abovementioned task shall undergo the abovementioned training before the commencement of a particular regular programs under such broadcast company.

Section 5. Method of Training or Seminar. The methods and techniques chosen must create an environment that facilities learning and fosters openness and trust, especially in sessions where there is sharing of personal experiences and dialogue. These must also empower the participants to develop gender sensitivity and disability awareness in their thinking, behavior, and action and effectively apply and integrate the same in the performance of their roles in the creation of content for a particular program in radio or television.

Training techniques can be through (1) open techniques which primary stimulate creativity or (2) closed techniques which is used to update knowledge and transfer new skills, consisting mainly of lectures, summary and synthesis, and demonstration.

Section 6. Failure to Conduct Training as Ground for Revocation of Permits and Licenses, and Franchise. Failure to conduct gender and disability sensitivity trainings and seminars as mandated by this Act shall be ground for suspension of the permit and ground for the revocation or non-renewal of the broadcasting company's franchise by the Congress.

Section 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* The National Telecommunications Commission, as the body that primary exercises jurisdiction over the supervision, adjudication, and control over all broadcasting companies in coordination and consultation with the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW) as the authority in women's concerns, expert on Gender and Development (GAD) and lead advocate of Disability Affairs (NCDA) as the Authority and expert on issues relating to persons with disabilities and the lead agency tasked to steer the course of program development for persons with disabilities, shall within ninety (90) days, from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 8. *Separability Clause.* In the event that any provision of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions unaffected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

Section 9. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 10. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

APPROVED.