

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **4050**



Introduced by Representative Richard I. Gomez, DPA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As a nation that prides itself on valuing every citizen's dignity and human rights, it is imperative that we ensure equal access to public entertainment and cultural experiences for all, including the hearing impaired. Mandating subtitles for the hearing impaired in all movie theatres across the Philippines is an essential step toward a more inclusive society. This legislative proposal seeks to address the current gaps in accessibility and promote inclusivity by providing the hearing impaired community with the means to fully enjoy and participate in one of the most popular forms of public entertainment—cinema.

The 1987 Philippine Constitution upholds the principle of equal protection under the law and the right to access public services. Specifically, Article II, Section 11 mandates the State to value the dignity of every human person and guarantee full respect for human rights. Additionally, Republic Act No. 7277, known as the Magna Carta for Disabled Persons, obligates the State to promote the welfare of persons with disabilities (PWDs), including ensuring their right to access information and cultural activities. Despite these legal frameworks, the hearing impaired population in the Philippines continues to face significant barriers in accessing public entertainment, particularly in movie theaters where subtitles are not consistently provided.

According to the 2010 Census of Population and Housing conducted by the Philippine Statistics Authority, approximately 1.57% of the population, or about 1.44 million Filipinos, live with some form of disability. A considerable portion of this demographic is hearing impaired. Despite their numbers, they remain underserved in public entertainment venues, particularly movie theatres, where the absence of subtitles excludes them from fully enjoying and understanding films. This lack of accessibility not only deprives them of entertainment but also alienates them from shared cultural experiences that are pivotal in fostering social integration and inclusion.

The primary objective of this bill is to rectify this inequity by mandating that all movie-producers provide subtitles for all films shown in the Philippines. This initiative aligns with the principles enshrined in the

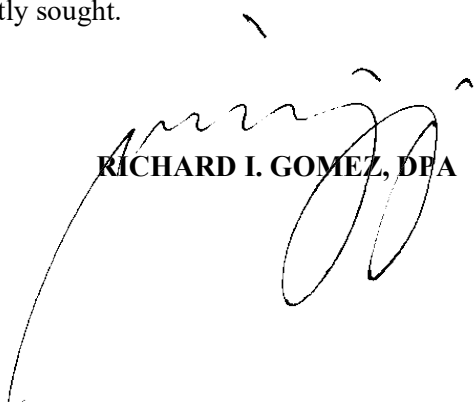
Magna Carta for Disabled Persons and aims to cultivate a more inclusive society by ensuring that the hearing impaired can equally access and enjoy cinematic experiences.

This proposed legislation stipulates that all movie producers must provide subtitles for all films, otherwise they will not be permitted to be shown in the country. To enforce compliance, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will conduct regular inspections and audits. Penalties for non-compliance will include fines and potential suspension of operating licenses. The bill also allows a one-year grace period from its enactment to provide movie producers with sufficient time to implement the necessary changes.

Implementing mandatory subtitles will significantly enhance accessibility for the hearing impaired, allowing them to enjoy films fully and participate in cultural discussions. By fostering an inclusive environment, this bill will facilitate the integration of hearing impaired individuals into mainstream society, enriching their cultural experiences and broadening their understanding and appreciation of the arts. This legislative measure is not just about providing access; it is about affirming the rights and dignity of every individual, ensuring that all Filipinos have the opportunity to partake in the cultural fabric of the nation.

By mandating that movie producers provide subtitles, we uphold the values of equality and inclusivity enshrined in our Constitution and laws. This bill ensures that every Filipino, regardless of their hearing ability, can participate fully in cultural and recreational activities.

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



RICHARD I. GOMEZ, DFA

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AN ACT
REQUIRING MOVIE PRODUCERS TO PROVIDE SUBTITLES FOR ALL FILMS
SHOWN IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE HEARING IMPAIRED
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 "*Movie Accessibility Act.*"

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure that persons with disabilities, particularly those who are hearing impaired, are given equal opportunities to participate in cultural and entertainment activities. The State shall adopt measures to provide accessible entertainment options to enhance the quality of life of persons with disabilities.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act:

- a. **"Movie theater"** refers to any establishment that screens films to the public
- b. **"Subtitles"** refer to the text displayed on screen representing the dialogue and other relevant audio information.
- c. **"Hearing impaired"** refers to individuals with partial or total inability to hear.

SEC. 4. *Mandatory Subtitling.* – All movie producers are required to provide subtitles for the benefit of the hearing impaired in all films screened in the country, ensuring accessibility for all patrons. These subtitles must be in the same language as the primary audio of the film or an

appropriate language commonly used in the Philippines, and should include dialogue, relevant sound effects, and musical cues, enhancing the movie-watching experience for individuals with hearing impairments.

No movie theater shall allow the screening of any film, whether locally produced or foreign, anywhere in the Philippines without the subtitles required under this Section.

SEC. 5. *Implementation and Compliance.* – Movie producers shall comply with the requirements of this Act within one (1) year from the effectivity thereof. The Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), in coordination with the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) shall issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity thereof, facilitating a smooth transition towards accessibility. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will also conduct regular inspections to ensure compliance and impose penalties for violations, ensuring accountability and adherence to the law.

SEC. 6. *Penalties.* – Any movie theater that allows the screening of any film in contravention with the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱50,000) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱100,000) for each violation. Repeated violations may result in the suspension or cancellation of the license or permit to operate the movie theater.

In case the offender is a corporation, partnership or association, or any other juridical person, the president, manager, administrator, or person-in-charge of the management of the business who knowingly and willfully voted or assented or acted with bad faith and gross negligence to the unlawful act punishable under this Act shall be liable therefor.

SEC. 7. *Incentives.* – Movie theaters that fully comply with this Act and provide additional accessibility features may be eligible for tax incentives or other forms of support as determined by the DTI in coordination with the Department of Finance (DOF).

SEC. 8. *Public Awareness Campaign.* – The DTI, in coordination with the NCDA and the MTRCB, shall conduct a nationwide information campaign to raise awareness about the requirements and benefits of this Act.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, other parts or provisions which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations, or portions thereof, inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,