

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4794



Introduced by **HON. BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN**

AN ACT
REQUIRING THE USE OF PLAIN LANGUAGE IN GOVERNMENT ADVISORIES
AND OTHER RELATED DOCUMENTS FOR PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution expressly recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern.¹ This constitutional mandate is operationalized through Executive Order No. 2, series of 2016, which provides that “[e]very Filipino shall have access to information, official records, public records and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions or decisions”.

However, access to information is of little value if the information itself is not understandable. One way to ensure the promotion of the people’s right to information is presenting said information in a clear and comprehensible manner. In fact, Republic Act No. 6713, or the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, provides that public officials and employees shall, among others, provide information of their policies and procedures in clear and understandable language and ensure openness of information.²

In view of the value of information in effective governance, this bill seeks to mandate the use of plain language in all government documents, including but not limited to notices, public advisories, and policy communications. This is essential to ensure transparency, accountability, and accessibility to government programs and policies.

In the 2nd District of Parañaque, we strive to ensure that all our program

¹ 1987 Constitution, Article III, Section 7.

² Republic Act No. 6713, Section 4(e).

announcements are simple, clear, and straightforward. For instance, when informing our constituents about the registration requirements for programs such as the *Bigay Ayuda at Oportunidad sa Nakakabata* or *BAON* or *Bigay Negosyo*, we use plain language to ensure that our instructions are easy to follow. It is our intention that no applicants will be disqualified due to unclear and incomprehensible information. The government must speak in the language that the people we serve can truly understand.

This measure is thus a vital step towards a more inclusive public service. When information is simply and clearly presented using plain and simple language, not only can Filipinos better appreciate government policies, but it can also promote citizen participation.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


BRIAN RAYMUND S. YAMSUAN
Representative
2nd District of Parañaque

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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 Language in Government Documents Act.”

SECTION. 2. Declaration of Policy. — The State recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern. The State further acknowledges that complex and technical language in government communications creates unnecessary barriers to the public’s understanding of government policies, programs, and projects. It is therefore the policy of the State to institutionalize plain language in all government documents intended for public distribution and dissemination.

SECTION 3. Plain Language in Government Documents. — To ensure the widest accessibility, clarity, and ease of understanding of public information, all national government agencies, offices, and instrumentalities, including government-owned and-controlled corporations (GOCCS), and local government units, are hereby mandated to adopt the use of plain language in English, Filipino and/or other regional languages or dialects, as may be deemed necessary, for all covered documents under this Act.

SECTION 4. Scope of Application. — The documents intended for public dissemination covered by this Act shall include but shall not be limited to advisories, notices, announcements, bulletins, forms and other papers for the application, citizens’ charter, documents detailing and explaining a government programs, activity

or project, replies to inquiries or requests for assistance or information, and any other document that the Civil Service Commission (CSC) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) deems as included in this Act.

SECTION 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The CSC, in coordination with the DICT, Governance Commission for GOCCs, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and other relevant government agencies, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SECTION 6. Separability Clause. - Should any provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, the remaining parts not affected thereby shall remain valid and operational.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. — All laws, decrees, orders, circulars, issuances, rules and regulations and parts thereof which are inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. — This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,