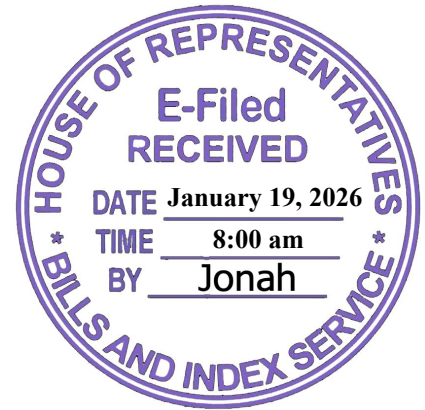




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 7145

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Communication is a fundamental human right and an essential condition for meaningful participation in society. For the Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing community, access to communication is also the gateway to education, employment, justice, public services, health care, and everyday civic life. Yet despite existing policies on disability rights, communication barriers remain pervasive across schools, government transactions, workplaces, courts, media, and public facilities. These barriers limit opportunities, heighten inequality, and undermine the State's constitutional duty to ensure the full and equal enjoyment of human rights for all persons with disabilities.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize communication accessibility as a legal right of Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals. It affirms that accessibility must account for diverse communication needs, including variations in hearing levels, language development, family environment, and cultural identity. It requires national and local government agencies to deliver services using appropriate and accessible modes of communication, whether oral, signed, or through augmentative and alternative communication systems.

The bill strengthens communication access in education by mandating the development of inclusive communication systems, upgrading teacher competencies, and providing essential support services such as interpreters, captioning, assistive listening devices, and other tools necessary for effective learning. It also requires workplaces, public institutions, and local government offices to provide responsive communication environments that allow deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals to participate fully and independently.

To ensure access to information, the measure mandates broadcast media to provide subtitles or signed communication. It also directs educational and regulatory agencies to promote advocacy programs, conduct research, and develop standards for oral and sign language interpreting. The bill further provides for inter-agency monitoring and evaluation, ensuring that implementation is informed by experts, educators, parents, and the deaf community itself.

By establishing clear responsibilities, standards, and accessible communication pathways across all public interactions and transactions, this measure advances the rights, dignity, and inclusion of Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing persons. It is a vital step toward a society where no individual is excluded from education, opportunity, or public service simply because they cannot hear.

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


EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA



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HOUSE BILL NO. 7145

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EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA

AN ACT
PROVIDING COMMUNICATION ACCESSIBILITY TO FILIPINO DEAF AND HARD
OF HEARING FOR FULL INCLUSION INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF SOCIETY

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

1 **SECTION 1. Title.** – This Act shall be known as "*Communication Accessibility*
2 *to Filipino Deaf and Hard of Hearing*".

3
4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 promote, protect, and ensure the full and equal enjoyment of all human rights and
6 fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities. Thus, national and local state
7 agencies shall uphold respect for their inherent dignity, individual autonomy, and
8 independence by guaranteeing accessibility and eliminating all forms of
9 discrimination in all public interactions and transactions, thereby ensuring their full
10 and effective participation and inclusion in society.

11
12 The State shall also take all appropriate measures to provide accessible
13 communication to develop productive and responsible citizens, equipped with the
14 essential competencies, skills and values for both life-long learning and employment.

15
16 Pursuance to this, communication accessibility that meets the various needs of
17 a diverse group of Filipinos who are deaf and hard of hearing shall be provided. This
18 accessibility measures shall take into consideration several factors like degree of
19 hearing loss; cognitive, emotional, linguistic, social and academic development;
20 family dynamics and culture.

21
22 **SEC. 3. Communication Accessibility** – Communication accessibility is a
23 legal right of Filipino deaf and hard of hearing to equal access to goods, services and
24 facilities in the community, schools, public transactions in health systems, Courts,
25 Quasi-Judicial Agencies and other Tribunals, broadcast media and workplaces.

1 Communication accessibility recognizes and respect the right of the Filipino
2 deaf and hard-of-hearing to communicate freely with others. Services and facilities
3 shall promote understanding of communication needs, explore language
4 opportunities, provide communication tools and not to favor any particular
5 communication mode or language over another.

7 **SEC. 4. Definitions of Terms. –**

- 9 1. *Communication Accessibility* refers to the provision of accommodations in
10 terms of appropriate goods, services and facilities to meet the communication
11 needs of the Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing to allow them full participation
12 of their functions in the society.
- 13 2. *Inclusion* refers to the enrolment of Filipino deaf and hard-of-hearing in regular
14 classrooms with the necessary accommodations and support services.
- 15 3. *Deaf* refer to those individuals whose hearing is non-functional for ordinary
16 purposes in life
- 17 4. *Hard of Hearing* refer to those individuals who have a defective sense of
18 hearing but are still functional with or without a hearing aid.
- 19 5. *Oral Communication* is a method in educating deaf and hard-of-hearing
20 children using only the spoken language, speech reading, and voice training.
- 21 6. *Signed Communication* uses manual communication and body language to
22 convey meaning, as opposed to acoustically conveyed sound patterns. This
23 can involve simultaneously combining hand shapes, orientation and
24 movement of the hands, arms or body, and facial expressions to fluidly
25 express a speaker's thoughts.

26 **SEC. 5. Communication Access in Education. –** Every deaf and hard-of-
27 hearing individual is entitled to an education in which his/her language and
28 communication mode is acknowledged, respected, assessed, developed and fully
29 utilized.

- 30 (1) **Language of Instruction.** The Department of Education (DepEd),
31 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Technical Education and Skills
32 Development Authority (TESDA), Early Childhood and Development
33 Council (ECCD) and all other national and local government agencies
34 involved in the education of the deaf and hard of hearing are tasked to
35 develop systems of communication that meet the needs and potentials of
36 Filipino deaf and hard of hearing. These systems shall include oral and
37 signed communication.
- 38 (2) **Training of Teachers.** In-service training shall include upgrading of
39 competencies on philosophies of education for the deaf and hard of
40 hearing, different communication modalities, approaches, methods in
41 teaching learners who are deaf and hard of hearing.

1
2 (3) **Support Services.** All education institutions shall provide augmentative
3 and alternative communication (computer-aided transcription services,
4 telephone handset amplifiers, assistive listening devices, hearing aids,
5 open and closed captioning, videotext displays, others), properly trained
6 and qualified oral and signed interpreters, notetakers and others.
7

8 **SEC. 6. Communication Access in Public Transactions, Services and**
9 **Facilities.** – All national and local government agencies are hereby directed to
10 deliver their services in the most appropriate languages and modes and means of
11 communication for the individual.
12

13 **SEC. 7. Communication Access in All Workplaces.** – Every government
14 office shall take all reasonable measures that would provide an environment
15 sensitive and responsive to the communication needs of the Filipino deaf and hard of
16 hearing.
17

18 **SEC. 8. Communication Access in Broadcast Media.** – Television stations
19 shall provide communication access through subtitles or signed communication to
20 Filipino deaf and hard of hearing.
21

22 **SEC. 9. Advocacy and Promotion of Communication Access.** –The DepEd,
23 CHED, TESDA, ECCD, and other national and local agencies shall take appropriate
24 steps to propagate access to goods, services and facilities. Basic Education
25 institutions that enroll deaf and hard-of-hearing students are urged to use oral or
26 signed communication or both with appropriate alternative and augmentative
27 communication depending on their needs and potentials. State Universities and
28 Colleges are directed to undertake research on education and communication
29 access for the deaf and hard of hearing and to include courses on different forms of
30 communication in their Special Education curriculum.
31

32 **SEC. 10. Standards for Oral and Sign Language Interpreting.** – The DepEd
33 and CHED shall develop standards for oral and sign language interpreting involving
34 deaf individuals, teachers with experience in the education of the deaf and parents of
35 the deaf.
36

37 **SEC. 11. Implementing Rules.** – The DepEd, CHED, TESDA, ECCD, PRC,
38 NCDA, Supreme Court, DOJ, and other relevant agencies shall, within 30 days after
39 its effective date, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations. For this purpose,
40 all stakeholders of all units in the community serving individuals who are deaf and
41 hard of hearing shall be involved. Also included are teachers with knowledge and
42 experience in all spectra of educational services for learners with hearing loss.
43

44 **SEC. 12. Monitoring of the Implementation of the Act.** – The NCDA, in
45 collaboration with representatives of all communities with hearing loss, is hereby
46 tasked to convene an Inter-Agency Committee including individuals and institutions
47 with knowledge and experience in oral and signed communication and their use, to
48 make an annual assessment of the implementation of this Act. The report of this
49 Inter-Agency Committee shall be transmitted annually to the House Committee on
50 Basic Education and Culture and Senate Committee on Education, Arts, and Culture

1 and published in accessible formats in their respective websites and through other
2 means necessary.

3
4 **SEC. 13. Appropriations.** – Implementation of this Act shall derive its funding
5 from the 1% appropriations for Persons with Disabilities as provided in the General
6 Appropriations Act.

7
8 **SEC. 14. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is
9 declared unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected
10 thereby shall remain in force and effect.

11
12 **SEC. 15. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
13 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the
14 provisions of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

15
16 **SEC. 16. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
17 complete publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

18
19 *Approved,*