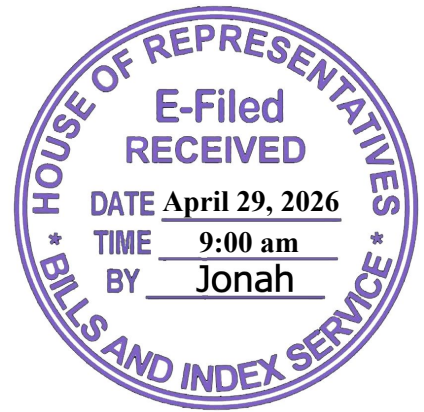




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 8995

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Access to culture, education, information, and public life is a fundamental component of human dignity. Yet for millions of Filipinos who are blind, low vision, deafblind, or living with other sensory impairments, visual media and public spaces remain partially or entirely inaccessible.

While Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Persons with Disabilities), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), the Marrakesh Treaty, and related accessibility laws affirm the right to equal participation in cultural and educational life, the Philippines has yet to institutionalize a comprehensive requirement for audio description in visual media and public entertainment venues.

Audio description is not an alteration of artistic content. It is a parallel narrative layer that describes essential visual elements—actions, settings, facial expressions, scene changes, and on-screen text—during natural pauses in dialogue. It allows persons with visual impairments to understand and enjoy films, television programs, theater productions, museums, tourist attractions, theme parks, and educational multimedia on equal footing with sighted audiences.

At present, access to audio description in the Philippines is inconsistent and largely voluntary. Some producers and institutions have adopted accessibility features, but there is no uniform legal standard requiring such inclusion. As a result, accessibility depends on goodwill rather than enforceable rights.

This bill seeks to establish audio description as a national accessibility standard across movies, television programs, live performances, museums, tourist sites, theme parks, educational videos, and advertising materials. It aligns the Philippines with evolving global best practices in universal design and inclusive media production.

The measure adopts a reasonable accommodation framework, recognizing that accessibility must be integrated into production and distribution processes. It further provides for technical standards to be formulated by appropriate government agencies

in accordance with international guidelines, including Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), and ensures coordination among cultural, communications, and disability affairs institutions.

Importantly, this bill recognizes that accessibility benefits extend beyond persons with blindness or low vision. Audio description assists senior citizens, individuals within the autism spectrum, persons with learning difficulties, and language learners. Universal design strengthens inclusivity not just for a specific group, but for society at large.

The proposed law also provides reasonable exemptions in cases where compliance would be economically burdensome, ensuring proportional implementation while upholding the principle of accessibility as the norm rather than the exception.

In a nation that values family, culture, and shared public experiences, exclusion from media and public spaces is not a minor inconvenience—it is a barrier to full enjoyment of the benefits of citizenship. Accessibility must not be treated as charity. It is a right.

By institutionalizing audio description as a standard feature in public and cultural content, this measure affirms the State’s commitment to inclusion, equality, and human dignity.

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. 8995

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EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

AN ACT
REQUIRING ALL MOVIES, VIDEOS, LIVE PERFORMANCES, MUSEUMS,
TOURIST SPOTS AND THEME PARKS, EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS AND
MULTIMEDIA PROJECTS TO HAVE AUDIO DESCRIPTION OPTION

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

1 **SECTION 1.** This Act shall be known as the *"Philippine Audio Description Act."*

2
3 **SEC. 2. Definition of Terms.** – As used in this Act, the term:

- 4
5 a. *Audio description* (also referred to as "description", "video description or
6 described video") shall mean to describe the process that consists of the
7 adaptation of video or multimedia content through descriptions of images
8 including actions, settings, facial expressions, costumes, scene changes,
9 surroundings and on-screen texts through audio narration during periods in
10 which there is no dialogue and whose sole purpose is to allow people who
11 are unable to adequately see the video due to blindness, low vision, deaf
12 blindness and other sensory impairments to enjoy any television, films,
13 cultural shows or theatrical contents without barriers. However, it works in
14 tandem with the audio of the video, and it does not replace the video's original
15 narration & soundtrack.
- 16
17 b. *Accessibility* shall mean the practice of making information, activities, and/or
18 environments sensible, meaningful, inclusive and usable for persons with
19 blindness and visual impairments.
- 20
21 c. *Accurate* shall mean that there must be no errors in word selection,
22 pronunciation, diction or enunciation.
- 23
24 d. *Appropriate* shall mean that the material should consider the intended
25 audience, be objective and seek simplicity.

e. *Economically burdensome* shall mean that which result in a significant difficulty or expense to be determined by the following factors:

- (1) The nature and cost of the audio description for the programming;
- (2) The impact on the operation of the provider or producer;
- (3) The financial resources of the provider or producer; and
- (4) The type of operations of the provider or producer.

f. *Prioritized* shall mean that a content is essential to the intended learning and that enjoyment outcomes is of primary importance.

g. *Reasonable Accommodation* shall mean modifications or adjustments that eliminate or minimize disability-related barriers to ensure equivalent access to video contents for all people.

h. *Universal Design* shall mean products and environments that are free of barriers, accessible to everyone, by considering accessibility to be integral to the design process, benefitted not just the intended end users, but a much larger number of people. Furthermore, integrating accessibility to the start of the design process was proven to result in more aesthetically pleasing outcomes at a lower cost and could be marketed to a greater percentage of the population.

SEC. 3. Purpose of audio description. – The purpose of audio description is to provide persons who are blind, low vision, deafblind and with other sensory impairment the additional information and complete picture and context that are considered essential to fully understanding, appreciating and enjoying the visual media they are watching.

Individuals exposed to the following conditions are considered beneficiaries of this Act:

- a. Blind and Low Vision
- b. Deaf -Blind
- c. Senior Citizens
- d. Persons within Autism spectrum disorder
- e. Persons with Learning Difficulties
- f. Language Learners

SEC. 4. Requirement to provide audio description. – All franchise holders or operators of television programs are required to provide audio description option in the broadcast of their programs including newscast and news programs, pre-scripted programs, sports and state related events.

Likewise, movie producers, live theater shows, video contents, tourist spots and theme parks shall also be required to provide audio description.

As reasonable accommodation for the beneficiaries of this Act, operators of movie theaters shall:

- a. Have and maintain the necessary equipment to provide audio description at a movie patron's seat whenever showing a digital movie produced, distributed, or otherwise made available with these features; and
- b. Ensure that theater staff are available and able to assist patrons with these audio description equipment features before, during, and after the showing of a movie.

SEC. 5. Scope. – The following establishments and platforms are covered by this Act:

- a. Movies;
- b. Live theaters;
- c. Tourist spots;
- d. Museums;
- e. Television programs;
- f. Theme parks;
- g. Video learning materials; and
- h. Advertising videos.

SEC. 6. Exemptions. – The following shall be exempt from providing audio description:

- a. Public service announcements shorter than ten (10) minutes; and
- b. When compliance is economically burdensome.

SEC. 7. Technical Standards. – The Department of Information, Communication, and Technology (DICT), Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB), Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Education (DepEd), Philippine Information Agency (PIA), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), National Library of the Philippines and Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) shall jointly formulate the technical standards in the production and showing of materials with audio description. Such technical standards shall be in accordance with:

- a. Web Content Accessibility Standards;
- b. Other international standards in producing educational, information and entertainment materials with audio description; and
- c. Technical specifications of equipment and technology for production and distribution of materials with audio description.

SEC. 8. Incentives. – Producers who implement audio description shall be given tax incentives in the form of tax credits to repay a percentage of qualifying production costs based on a pre-determined formula.

SEC. 9. Penalties. – Any franchise holder or operator of television stations and producer of television programs who shall violate the provisions of this Act shall be punished by a fine of not less than fifty thousand pesos (P50,000.00) but not more than one hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) or by imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1) year, or both, at the discretion of the court.

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

1 management of the business who knowingly and willfully voted or assented or acted
2 with bad faith and gross negligence to the unlawful act punishable under this Act shall
3 be liable therefor. In addition, the license or permit to operate its business shall be
4 cancelled.

5
6 **SEC. 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – The MTRCB, in consultation
7 with the National Telecommunications Commission and other concerned agencies
8 and entities, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations within one hundred
9 twenty (120) days from the effectivity date of this Act, including guidelines and
10 applications of exemption, system of warnings, penalties and appeals, and monitoring
11 and compliance.

12
13 **SEC. 11. Review and Monitoring Committee.** – There shall be Review and
14 Committee on the implementation of this Act which shall be composed of the head or
15 representative from the MTRCB, National Commission for Culture and the Arts
16 (NCCA), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), and representatives from non-
17 government organizations and the academe. The MTRCB shall lead the committee.

18
19 **SEC. 12. Suppletory Legal basis.** – The following shall be suppletorily used in
20 the implementation of the provisions of this Act:

- 21
22 a. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
23 b. Marrakesh Treaty;
24 c. Republic Act otherwise known as the “Magna Carta for the Disabled
25 Persons;”
26 d. Republic Act 10905 otherwise known as “An Act Requiring All Franchise
27 Holders or Operators of Television Stations and Producers of Television
28 Programs to Broadcast or Present Their Programs With Closed Captions
29 Option, and For Other Purposes;”
30 e. Republic Act 10372 otherwise known as “An Act Amending Certain
31 Provisions of Republic Act No. 8293, otherwise known as the ‘Intellectual
32 Property Code of the Philippines’, and For Other Purposes;”
33 f. Batas Pambansa Blg. 344 otherwise known as “An Act to Enhance the
34 Mobility of Disabled Persons by Requiring Certain Buildings, Institutions,
35 Establishments and Public Utilities to Install Facilities and Other Devices;”
36 and
37 g. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.1.

38
39 **SEC. 13. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
40 unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected thereby shall
41 remain in force and effect.

42
43 **SEC. 14. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
44 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
45 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

48
49 *Approved,*