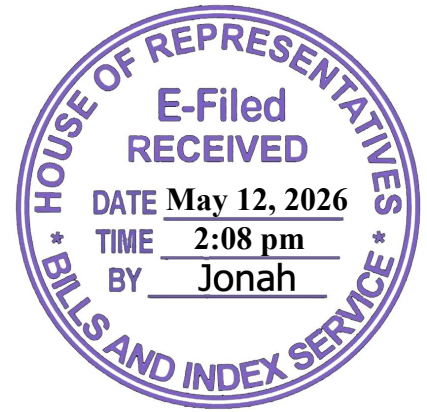


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9213



Introduced by **Representative Ryan S. Recto**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

According to estimates of the World Health Organization (WHO), at least 2.2 billion people worldwide experience near or distance vision impairment. Despite significant advances in digital technology, a substantial portion of web-based and audiovisual content remains inaccessible to individuals who are blind, have low vision, color blindness, or other visual impairments.

In view of this, there is a compelling need to adopt measures that ensure digital and audiovisual content is accessible to persons with visual disabilities. This objective is consistent with the principles embodied in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the international standards established under the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), which promote equal access to information and communication technologies.

Audio description is a recognized accessibility feature designed to narrate key visual elements of media content. It enables persons who are blind or visually impaired to fully understand and enjoy audiovisual materials on an equal footing with sighted audiences.

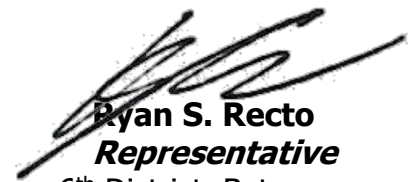
Beyond its benefits for individuals with visual impairments, audio description also serves as an effective support for persons with cognitive disabilities who may experience difficulty interpreting visual cues or who prefer auditory learning modalities. It further provides practical benefits to users who engage with content in eyes-free environments, as well as to individuals learning a foreign language, for whom audio description can enhance comprehension and contextual understanding.

Moreover, audio description contributes positively to language development, particularly among children and individuals with autism spectrum disorder. By explicitly describing actions, emotions, and facial expressions, audio description aids in the

development of vocabulary, language skills, and the comprehension of social and emotional cues that may otherwise be challenging to interpret.

Finally, audio description offers flexibility in content consumption by allowing users to engage with audiovisual materials without continuous visual attention. This has led to emerging usage patterns wherein audio-described media is consumed similarly to audiobooks, enabling individuals to listen while performing other activities such as driving, cooking, or household tasks. As listening plays a critical role in language acquisition and cognitive development, audio description may also serve as a valuable pedagogical tool that reinforces learning, introduces new vocabulary, and promotes active engagement among learners.

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



Ryan S. Recto
Representative
6th District, Batangas

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 9213

Introduced by **Representative Ryan S. Recto**

AN ACT
MANDATING THE PROVISION OF AUDIO DESCRIPTION IN AUDIOVISUAL
MEDIA AND PUBLIC CONTENTS

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title:* - This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine Audio*
2 *Description Act.*"

3
4 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to
5 promote and protect the rights of persons with disabilities and other sectors with
6 sensory, cognitive, or communication barriers by ensuring their full, effective, and
7 equal access to information, education, culture, and entertainment.

8
9 In line with the Constitution, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of
10 Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), and existing accessibility laws, the State shall
11 institutionalize audio description as a reasonable accommodation and accessibility
12 feature in audiovisual and public content to enable meaningful participation, inclusion,
13 and enjoyment by all members of society.

14
15 Sec 3. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall
16 mean:

17
18 a) *Audio Description (AD)* refers to an accessibility service that provides
19 narrated descriptions of key visual elements in media and live settings,
20 including actions, facial expressions, settings, graphics, and on-screen text,
21 inserted during natural pauses in dialogue or delivered through assistive
22 devices.

23
24 b) *Franchise Holder or Operator* refers to any individual, corporation,
25 partnership, or entity granted authority to produce, distribute, broadcast,
26 stream, or publicly exhibit audiovisual content.

1 c) *Audiovisual media* refers to any content combining sound and visual
2 elements, including but not limited to television programs, films, online videos,
3 learning materials, and advertising.

4
5 d) *Live Events* refers to performances or activities presented in real time to
6 an audience, including theatrical productions, sports events, cultural
7 performances, and State-related events.

8
9 Sec. 4. *Mandatory Provision of Audio Description.* – All establishments and
10 platforms are required to provide audio description services in every cinema during
11 the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) in selected malls in every region.

12
13 Participating cinemas shall ensure that at least one (1) scheduled screening
14 time slot for every MMFF entry is made available with audio description features
15 accessible to viewers with visual impairments and other beneficiaries under this Act.

16
17 In addition thereto, cinemas offering special promotional screening days for
18 senior citizens, including Mondays or similar designated schedules, shall ensure that
19 at least one (1) audio-described screening is made available during such periods,
20 subject to technical feasibility and scheduling considerations.

21
22 Such screenings shall be offered in selected cinemas and time slots, subject to
23 guidelines and minimum accessibility standards to be determined under the
24 Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

25
26 The extent and phasing of compliance shall be determined in the IRR, taking
27 into account technical feasibility, program type, and public interest.

28
29 Sec. 5. *Purpose of Audio Description.* – Audio description is intended to provide
30 persons who are blind, have low vision, are deafblind, or have other sensory or
31 cognitive impairments with access to essential visual information necessary to
32 understand, appreciate, and fully enjoy audiovisual content.

33
34 Sec. 6. *Beneficiaries.* – The following individuals shall be considered
35 beneficiaries of this Act:

- 36
37 a) Persons who are blind or have low vision
38
39 b) Persons who are deaf-blind
40
41 c) Senior Citizens
42
43 d) Persons with Autism Spectrum Disorder
44
45 e) Persons with Learning Difficulties or cognitive impairments
46
47 f) Language Learners and individuals with communication barriers

1
2
3 *Sec. 7. Technical Standards.* – The following agencies shall formulate and adopt
4 the technical standards for the effective implementation of this Act:

- 5
6 a) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)
7
8 b) Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB)
9
10 c) Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP)
11
12 d) Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA)
13
14 e) Commission on Higher Education (CHED)
15
16 f) Department of Education (DepEd)
17
18 g) Philippine Information Agency (PIA)
19
20 h) National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA)
21
22 i) National Library of the Philippines (NLP)
23

24 Such standards shall be aligned with recognized international accessibility
25 benchmarks, including but not limited to:

- 26
27 a) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG);
28
29 b) International best practices for audio description production and
30 delivery;
31
32 c) Technical specifications for equipment, software, and distribution
33 systems.
34

35 *Sec. 8. Incentives.* - Qualified producers and content providers who comply
36 with the requirements of this Act shall be entitled to tax incentives, including tax
37 credits equivalent to a percentage of qualifying production costs incurred for audio
38 description, subject to existing tax laws and implementing guidelines.
39

40 *Sec. 8. Penalties.* - Any franchise holder, operator, or producer who violates the
41 provisions of this Act shall be punished by:

- 42
43 a) A fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱50,000.00) but not more
44 than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱100,000.00); or
45

1 b) Imprisonment of not less than six (6) months but not more than one (1)
2 year.

3
4 If the offender is a juridical person, the president, manager, administrator, or
5 person-in-charge who knowingly and willfully participated in or allowed the violation
6 shall be held liable. In addition, the license or permit to operate may be suspended or
7 revoked.

8
9 Sec. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The Movie and Television Review
10 and Classification Board (MTRCB), in consultation with the National
11 Telecommunications Commission (NTC), DICT, NCDA, and other concerned agencies,
12 shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations within one hundred twenty
13 (120) days from the effectivity of this Act.

14
15 The IRR shall include compliance mechanisms, exemptions, monitoring
16 systems, enforcement procedures, penalties, and appeals.

17
18 Sec. 10. *Review and Monitoring Committee.* - The following government
19 agencies and related offices shall review and Monitor the implementation of the
20 provisions of this Act:

- 21
22 a) Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB);
23
24 b) National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA);
25
26 c) National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA); and
27
28 d) Representatives from OPDs, NGOs, academe.

29
30 SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If for any reason, any part or provision of this
31 Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not
32 affected shall remain in full force and effect.

33
34 SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
35 rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
36 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

37
38 SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
39 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of national circulation.

40
41 *Approved,*