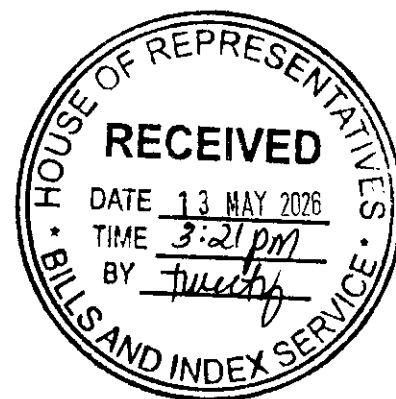


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 9249



Introduced by Representative Lorenz R. Defensor

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 24 of the 1987 Constitution provides that "the State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building." Likewise, Article III, Section 7 recognizes "the right of the people to information on matters of public concern." These constitutional mandates underscore the indispensable role of mass media in ensuring that information reaches the public, promoting transparency, accountability, and informed citizen participation in governance.

This bill seeks to renew the franchise granted to Newsounds Broadcasting Network, Inc. under Republic Act No. 9214, authorizing it to construct, install, establish, operate, and maintain radio and television broadcasting stations throughout the Philippines for another twenty-five (25) years.

Since its establishment and operation, Newsounds Broadcasting Network, Inc. has grown into one of the country's most recognized and trusted broadcasting institutions. Through its AM and FM stations operating under the unified brands "Bombo Radyo" and "Star FM," the Network has consistently delivered credible news, balanced public affairs programming, educational content, and quality entertainment to millions of Filipinos nationwide, particularly in the provinces and underserved communities. Its commitment to public service has enabled it to provide timely, accessible, and reliable information to the Filipino people, including through broadcasts in local dialects and continuous 24/7 coverage during major national events, calamities, and other significant occasions through its dependable satellite interconnection system.

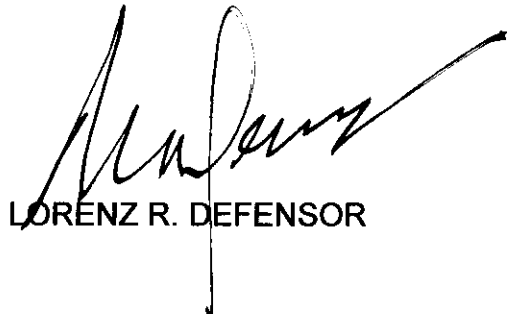
The Network has likewise demonstrated leadership and innovation in the Philippine broadcasting industry through the modernization of its operations and broadcasting facilities. It became the first and only radio network in the country to fully digitize the drama production centers of all its AM stations nationwide, resulting in improved audio quality and enhanced local drama productions. It has also adopted fully computerized and internet-based operational systems that facilitate efficient communication and transmission of documents and production materials among its

stations and the Network Creative Department in Makati City. Through the continuous upgrading of its equipment and technology, the Network has streamlined operations, improved productivity, and ensured cost-efficient delivery of services. Moreover, through its website and online streaming platform at www.bomboradyo.com, the Network has made its news and audio broadcasts accessible worldwide on a 24/7 basis.

The Network's dedication to excellence in broadcasting has earned recognition from various award-giving bodies for its outstanding programs in news, public affairs, education, and entertainment. In the 47th Catholic Mass Media Awards (CMMA), Bombo Radyo Philippines received major distinctions, including Best News Program for "Bombo Network News," Best Business News or Feature for "Bombo Special Report," and Best Entertainment Program for "Pinoy Memories" of Star FM Iloilo.

The renewal of the franchise will enable Newsounds Broadcasting Network, Inc. to further strengthen and modernize its broadcast facilities, expand its reach, and continue delivering reliable news, educational programming, public service announcements, and quality entertainment to the Filipino people.

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



HON. LORENZ R. DEFENSOR

Republic of the Philippines
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House Bill No. 9249

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**AN ACT RENEWING FOR ANOTHER TWENTY-FIVE YEARS THE FRANCHISE
GRANTED TO NEWSOUNDS BROADCASTING NETWORK, INC., UNDER
REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9214, ENTITLED "AN ACT GRANTING THE NEWSOUNDS
BROADCASTING NETWORK, INC. A FRANCHISE TO CONSTRUCT, INSTALL,
ESTABLISH, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN RADIO AND TELEVISION
BROADCASTING STATIONS IN THE PHILIPPINES"**

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

1
2 **Section 1. Nature and Scope of Franchise.**— Subject to the provisions of
3 the Constitution and applicable laws, rules and regulations, the franchise
4 granted to Newsounds Broadcasting Network, Inc., hereunder referred to as the
5 Grantee, its successors or assignees, under Republic Act No. 9214, to
6 construct, install, establish, operate and maintain for commercial purposes and
7 in the public interest, radio and television broadcasting stations in the
8 Philippines, where frequencies and/or channels are still available for radio
9 and/or television broadcasting, through microwave, satellite or whatever means
10 including the use of any new technologies in television and radio broadcasting
11 systems, with the corresponding technological auxiliaries and facilities, special
12 broadcast and other program and distribution services and relay stations, is
13 hereby renewed for another twenty-five (25) years.

14
15 **Sec. 2. Manner of Operation of Stations or Facilities.**— The stations or
16 facilities of the Grantee shall be constructed and operated in a manner as will, at
17 most, result only in the minimum interference on wavelengths or frequencies of
18 existing stations or other stations which may be established by law, without in any
19 way diminishing its own right to use its selected wavelengths or frequencies and the
20 quality of transmission or reception thereon as should maximize rendition of the
21 Grantee's services and/or the availability thereof.

1
2 **Sec. 3. Prior Approval of the National Telecommunications Commission.**

3 – The Grantee shall secure from the National Telecommunications Commission
4 (NTC) the appropriate permits and licenses for the construction and operation of its
5 stations and facilities and shall not use any frequency in the radio/television spectrum
6 without having been authorized by the NTC. The NTC, however, shall not
7 unreasonably withhold or delay the grant of any such authority.

8
9 In case of any violation of the provisions of this franchise, the NTC shall have
10 the authority to revoke or suspend, after due process, the permits or licenses it
11 issued pursuant to the franchise. The NTC may recommend to Congress of the
12 Philippines the revocation of the franchise for any violation of the provisions of this
13 franchise.

14
15 **Sec. 4. Responsibility to the Public.**—The Grantee shall provide, free of

16 charge, adequate public service time which is reasonable and sufficient to enable the
17 government, through the broadcasting stations or facilities of the Grantee, to reach
18 the pertinent populations or portions thereof, on important public issues and relay
19 important public announcements and warnings concerning public emergencies and
20 calamities, as necessity, urgency, or law may require; provide at all times sound and
21 balanced programming; conform to the ethics of honest enterprise; promote public
22 participation; assist in the functions of public information and education; promote
23 audience sensibility and empowerment including closed captioning; and not use its
24 stations or facilities for the broadcasting of obscene and indecent language, speech,
25 act or scene, the dissemination of deliberately false information or willful
26 misrepresentation, to the detriment of the public interest, or to incite, encourage or
27 assist in subversive or treasonable acts.

28
29 Public service time referred herein shall be equivalent to a maximum
30 aggregate of ten percent (10%) of paid commercials or advertisements which shall
31 be allocated based on need to the Executive and Legislative branches, the Judiciary,
32 Constitutional Commissions, and international humanitarian organizations duly
33 recognized by statutes: *Provided*, That the NTC shall increase the public service time
34 in case of extreme emergency or calamity. The NTC shall issue rules and regulations
35 for this purpose, the effectivity of which shall commence upon applicability with other
36 similarly situated broadcast network franchise holders.

37
38 Pursuant to Republic Act No. 8370, otherwise known as the "Children's
39 Television Act of 1997", the Grantee shall allot a minimum fifteen percent (15%) of
40 the daily total airtime of each broadcasting network or station to child-friendly shows
41 within its regular programming.

42
43 **Sec. 5. Right of Government.**— The radio spectrum is a finite resource that is

44 a part of the national patrimony and the use thereof is a privilege conferred upon the

1 Grantee by the State and may be withdrawn anytime after due process.

2

3 A special right is hereby reserved to the President of the Philippines, in times
4 of war, rebellion, public peril, calamity, emergency, disaster or disturbance of peace
5 and order, to temporarily take over and operate the stations or facilities of the
6 Grantee, to temporarily suspend the operation of any station or facility in the interest
7 of public safety, security and public welfare, or to authorize the temporary use and
8 operation thereof by any agency of the government, upon due compensation to the
9 Grantee, for the use of said stations or facilities during the period when they shall be
10 so operated.

11

12 **Sec. 6. Term of Franchise.**— This franchise shall be for a term of twenty-five
13 (25) years from the expiration of its previous franchise under Republic Act No. 9214,
14 unless sooner revoked or cancelled. This franchise shall be deemed ipso facto
15 revoked in the event the Grantee fails to operate continuously for two (2) years.

16

17 **Sec. 7. Self-regulation by and Undertaking of Grantee.**— The Grantee shall
18 not require any previous censorship of any speech, play, act or scene, or other matter
19 to be broadcast from its stations, but if any speech, play, act or scene, or other matter
20 should constitute a violation of the law or infringement of a private right, the Grantee
21 shall be free from any liability, civil or criminal, for such speech, play, act or scene,
22 or other matter: *Provided*, That the Grantee, during any broadcast, shall cut off the
23 airing of speech, play, act or scene, or other matter being broadcast if the tendency
24 thereof is to propose and/or incite treason, rebellion or sedition; or the language used
25 therein or the theme thereof is indecent or immoral: *Provided, further*, That willful
26 failure to do so shall constitute a valid cause for the cancellation of this franchise.

27

28 **Sec. 8. Warranty in Favor of the National and Local Governments.**— The
29 Grantee shall hold the national, provincial, city, and municipal governments of the
30 Philippines free from all claims, liabilities, demands, or actions arising out of
31 accidents, causing injury to persons or damage to properties, during the construction
32 or operation of the stations of the Grantee.

33

34 **Sec. 9. Commitment to Provide and Promote the Creation of Employment**
35 **Opportunities.**— The Grantee shall create employment opportunities and shall allow
36 on-the-job training in its franchise operation: *Provided*, That priority shall be accorded
37 to the residents of the place where its principal office is located: *Provided, further*,
38 That the Grantee shall follow the applicable labor standards and allowance
39 entitlement under existing labor laws, rules and regulations and similar issuances.

40

41 The employment opportunities or jobs created shall be reflected in the General
42 Information Sheet (GIS) to be submitted to the Securities and Exchange Commission
43 (SEC) annually.

1 **Sec. 10. Sale, Lease, Transfer, Usufruct, or Assignment of Franchise. –**

2 – The Grantee shall not sell, lease, transfer, grant the usufruct of, or assign this
3 franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder to any person, firm,
4 company, corporation, or other commercial or legal entity, or merge with any other
5 corporation, or entity, or transfer the controlling interest of the Grantee, whether as a
6 whole or in part, and whether simultaneously or contemporaneously, to any such
7 person, firm, company, corporation, or entity without the prior approval of Congress:
8 *Provided*, That Congress shall be informed of any sale, lease, transfer, grant of
9 usufruct, or assignment of franchise or the rights and privileges acquired thereunder,
10 or of the merger, or transfer of the controlling interest within sixty (60) days after the
11 completion of said transaction: *Provided, further*, That any such sale, transfer, or
12 assignment is in accordance with the constitutional limitations: *Provided, furthermore*,
13 That failure to report to Congress such change of ownership shall render the
14 franchise *ipso facto* revoked: *Provided, finally*, That any person or entity to which this
15 franchise is sold, transferred, or assigned, shall be subject to the same conditions,
16 terms, restrictions, and limitations of this Act.

17 **Sec. 11. Dispersal of Ownership.–** In accordance with the constitutional

18 provision encouraging public participation in public utilities, the Grantee shall offer to
19 Filipino citizens at least thirty percent (30%) of its outstanding capital stock, or a
20 higher percentage that may hereafter be provided by law, in any securities exchange
21 in the Philippines within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act: *Provided*, That in
22 cases where public shares is not applicable, other methods of encouraging public
23 participation by citizens and corporations operating public utilities must be
24 implemented. Noncompliance therewith shall render the franchise *ipso facto* revoked.

25 **Sec. 12. Reportorial Requirement.–** The Grantee shall submit an annual

26 report to the Congress of the Philippines, through the Committee on Legislative
27 Franchises of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Public Services
28 of the Senate, on its compliance with the terms and conditions of the franchise and
29 on its operations on or before April 30 of every year during the term of its franchise.
30
31

32 The annual report shall include an update on the roll-out, development,
33 operation and/or expansion of business; audited financial statements; latest GIS
34 officially submitted to the SEC, if applicable; certification of the NTC on the status of
35 its permits and operations; and an update on the dispersal of ownership undertaking,
36 if applicable.

37
38 The reportorial compliance certificate issued by Congress shall be required
39 before any application for permit or certificate is accepted by the NTC.

40
41 **Sec.13. Fine.–** The failure of the Grantee to submit the requisite annual report
42 to Congress shall be penalized with a fine in the amount of Five hundred pesos
43 (P500.00) per working day of non-compliance which shall be collected by the NTC.

1 The fine shall be collected separately from the reportorial penalties imposed by the
2 NTC and shall be remitted to the Bureau of the Treasury.

3

4 **Sec.14. Equality Clause.**— Any advantage, favor, privilege, exemption, or
5 immunity granted under existing franchises, or which may hereafter be granted, upon
6 prior review and approval of Congress, shall become part of this franchise and shall
7 be accorded immediately and unconditionally to herein Grantee: *Provided, however,*
8 That the foregoing shall neither apply to nor affect provisions concerning territory
9 covered by the franchise, the term of the franchise, or the type of service authorized
10 by the franchise: *Provided, further,* That the foregoing shall not apply to the sale,
11 lease, transfer, grant of usufruct, or assignment of legislative franchises with prior
12 congressional approval.

13

14 **Sec.15. Repealability and Non-exclusivity Clause.**—This franchise shall be
15 subject to amendment, alteration, or repeal by Congress when public interest so
16 requires and shall not be interpreted as an exclusive grant of the privileges herein
17 provided.

18

19 **Sec.16. Separability Clause.**—If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is
20 held invalid, all other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

21

22 **Sec.17. Repealing Clause.** — All laws, presidential decrees, executive
23 orders, letters of instruction, administrative rules and regulations or parts thereof,
24 which are contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby
25 repealed or modified accordingly.

26

27 **Sec.18. Effectivity.**— This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
28 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

29

30 Approved,