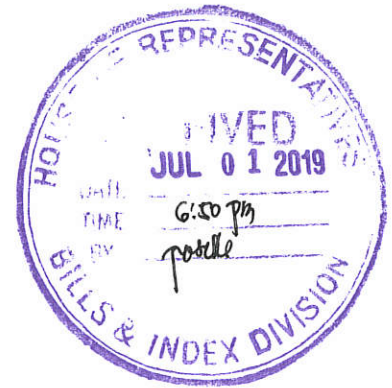


Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 898



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Introduced by Rep. MARIO VITTORIO "MARVEY" A. MARIÑO  
5<sup>th</sup> District, Batangas

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**AN ACT REQUIRING ALL BROADCAST MEDIA TO PROVIDE ADEQUATE FREE AIRTIME FOR PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFOMERCIALS TO ENABLE THE GOVERNMENT TO REACH THE POPULATION AND EDUCATE THE PEOPLE ON IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES RELATIVE TO LAWS, HEALTH, ROAD AND TRAFFIC DISCIPLINE, PUBLIC SAFETY, GOOD VALUES, WELFARE RIGHTS AND BENEFITS, AND DISASTER PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMS**

***EXPLANATORY NOTE***

Section 24, Article II of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides that the State recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building. Information, after all, is power. Mere recognition of its power, however, is not enough. One can only witness the true power of information when it has been used and applied effectively in nation-building. Instilling discipline, for instance, requires information. A disciplined citizenry presupposes an informed society. One cannot be expected to obey laws, rules, or code of behavior without knowing and understanding what these laws, rules, and code of behavior are. Clearly, the role of communication and information is vital in nation-building.

The government is the agency or instrumentality through which the will of the State is formulated, expressed and realized.<sup>1</sup> One of the important tasks of the government is to act for the State as *parens patriae*, or guardian of the rights of the people.<sup>2</sup> As guardian of the rights of the people, it is the duty of the government to see to it that the citizens are well-informed of their rights, duties and responsibilities. It is only when people are well-informed of these rights, duties, and responsibilities that they realize the importance of their role and purpose in society.

Mass media, on the other hand, is the primary means of communication to reach the vast majority of the general public. The vast reach and influence of media can be seen especially during elections. Political advertisements have been an effective tool in conveying a candidate's message and in gaining votes and public support.

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<sup>1</sup> Cruz, I. (2003). Political Law.

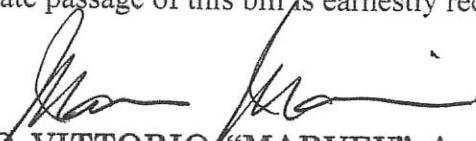
<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

Television, for instance, is considered the most cost effective medium of dissemination.<sup>3</sup> Even a slight increase in television exposure can significantly boost a candidate's popularity, name recall and electability.<sup>4</sup> If mass media can be used as means to get votes, the more it can be used to inform the public of their rights, their duties, and their responsibilities. Above all, mass media has the duty to inform people.

Considering all these, it is vital that we have a law mandating mass media, in particular radio and television broadcasting companies to allocate airtime for public service announcements and infomercials on laws, social welfare, public safety, government processes and other matters of public and national concern to increase awareness and inform the public of their rights, duties and responsibilities.

In truth, radio and television broadcasting companies, which are given franchises, do not own the airwaves and frequencies through which they transmit broadcast signals and images. They are merely given the temporary privilege of using them. Since a franchise is a mere privilege, the exercise of the privilege may reasonably be burdened with the performance by the grantee of some form of public service.<sup>5</sup> By allocating public service announcements and government infomercials, TV and radio networks are performing some form of public service for the Filipino people. It is time government and mass media work together for the betterment of this country.

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

  
MARIO VITTORIO "MARVEY" A. MARIÑO

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<sup>3</sup> GMA v. COMELEC, G.R. No. 205357, September 2014

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> Telecommunications and Broadcast Attorneys of the Philippines, Inv. v. COMELEC, G.R. No. 132922, April 1998

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

**SECTION 1.** All broadcast media shall provide public service time of at least five (5) minutes per day to enable the government to educate and increase the awareness of the people on the following matters:

- a. Laws;
- b. Health;
- c. Road and traffic discipline;
- d. Government processes;
- e. Public safety;
- f. Good values;
- g. Welfare rights and benefits; and
- h. Disaster preparedness programs

*Provided that* a minimum of two (2) minutes a day of airtime shall be allocated during primetime.

For purposes of this Act, *broadcast media* shall refer to radio or television stations engaged in the business of distributing audio and video content to a dispersed audience via any audio or mass communication media.

**SECTION 2.** The Philippine Information Agency (PIA) shall be the lead agency in coordinating with all broadcast media with regard to the usage of airtime including the subject matter. It shall cause the production of the public service commercials designed to promote and inform the public on the latest laws, issues, announcements,

warnings, plans and programs of the government to be aired by all TV and radio networks.

**SECTION 3. *Suspension, Non-Renewal of Franchise.*** – Failure of any TV or radio station facility to provide the required public service time under Section 1 of this Act shall be ground for suspension, revocation or non-renewal of franchise to operate TV or radio networks.

**SECTION 4. *Implementing Rules.*** – Within ninety (90) days from effectivity of this Act, the Director General of the PIA, in coordination with the *Kapisanan ng mga Broadkaster ng Pilipinas* (KBP), shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with any provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 6. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,