

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez

House Bill No. **3821**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State recognizes the importance of the disabled sector. For example, it established the National Commission for Disabled Persons to ensure that the rights of the handicapped are protected, and that all programs and services are universal and accessible to all segments of society.

Although modern technology has created devices to cater to the special needs of handicapped persons, they still need assistance with communication facilities for the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired.

This proposed measure seeks to make the national telecommunication system available to the hearing-impaired and speech-impaired.

The early passage of this proposed measure is highly recommended.


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ

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AN ACT
PROVIDING TELECOMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS ACCESSIBILITY TO THE HEARING-
IMPAIRED AND SPEECH-IMPAIRED

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. — This Act shall be known as the "**Telecommunications Accessibility Enhancement Act**".

SEC 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared as a policy of the State to provide handicapped persons protection and assistance to hasten their integration into the mainstream of society.

SEC 3. Definition. — For the purpose of this Act, the following terms shall have the corresponding definitions:

- (1) "TDD" or Telecommunications Devices for the Deaf is a machine which employs graphic communications in the transmission of coded signals through the nationwide telecommunications system;
- (2) "Secretary" refers to the Secretary of Transportation and Communications.

SEC 4. National Telecommunications Systems Requirements. —

- (a) Accessibility of Telecommunication System — The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) shall issue the necessary rules and regulations to assure that the national telecommunications system is fully accessible to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.
- (b) Specific Requirement — in carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall —
 - (1) provide for establishment of a relay system for users of TDD's;
 - (2) within ninety (90) days after the enactment of this Act, expand such relay system by employing at least one additional operator;
 - (3) within one hundred eighty (180) days after such date of enactment:
 - (a) conduct, as part of the rule-making proceeding required by subsection (a), analysis of modifications to the National Telecommunications System that the Secretary, in his discretion, determines to be necessary to achieve the objectives of subsection (a); and,
 - (b) submit report on the results of such analysis to each House of Congress;
 - (4) within one hundred eighty (180) days after completion of such analysis, prescribe the regulations required by subsection (a);
 - (5) assemble, publish and maintain a directory of TDD and other devices used by national agencies to comply with such regulations, and publish in national agency directories, access numbers of TDDs and such other devices; and,

- (6) adopt the design of a standard logo to signify the presence of a TDD or other device used to comply with such regulations.

SEC 5. *Additional Requirements.* –

- (a) **Support for Research** – The Secretary shall seek to promote research by government agencies and private entities to reduce the cost and improve the capabilities of telecommunications devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.
- (b) **Planning to Assimilate Technological Development** – The Secretary, in planning future alterations to and modifications of the National Telecommunications System, shall take into account results of the analysis required by Section 4 (b) (3) and any technological improvements in telecommunications devices and systems that provide accessibility to hearing-impaired and speech-impaired individuals.

SEC 6. *Separability Clause.* – Any portion or provision of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions and provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

SEC 7. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly

SEC 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.