

[AS PASSED BY THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY]

A

Bill

*to ensure access of media to persons in all matters of public importance through
Pakistan Sign Language*

WHEREAS it is expedient for deaf persons to access information in all matters of public importance through **Pakistan Sign Language** broadcast media as guaranteed by the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and for matters connected therewith and incidental thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title, extent and commencement.- (1) This Act shall be called the Access to the Media (Deaf) Persons Bill, 2022.

(2) It extends to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.- (1) In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context,-

(a) "Authority" means the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority established under section 3 of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002;

(b) "Board" means the National Policy Board established under section 5;

(c) "broadcast media" means such media which originate and propagate broadcast and prerecorded signals by terrestrial means or through satellite for television and includes teleporting, provision of access to broadcast signals by channel providers and such other forms of broadcast media as the

Authority may, with the approval of the Government, by notification in the official Gazette, specify;

- (d) "Cable TV" means reception of broadcast and prerecorded signals from different channels and their distribution to subscribers through a set of closed transmission;
- (e) "channel" means the set of frequencies that a broadcast station occupies for broadcasting;
- (f) "Division concerned" means the Division to which the business of this Act shall stand allocated;
- (g) "electronic media" includes the broadcast media and distribution services;
- (h) "Government" means the Federal Government;
- (i) "media" means communication used regularly for broadcasting of information and expression of views and opinions through electronic media including state sponsored and private television channels for the purpose of this Act;
- (j) "member" means a member of the Board and includes the Chairperson;
- (k) "national broadcaster" means the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation, the Pakistan Television Corporation and the Shalimar Recording and Broadcasting Company;
- (l) "Pakistan Sign Language" is the preferred language of Pakistan's deaf population holding the same status as minority spoken languages
- (m) "prescribed" means prescribed by the rules or regulations made under this Act;
- (n) "regulations" means the regulations made under this Act; and
- (o) "rules" means the rules made under this Act.

(2) The words and expressions used herein and not defined but defined in the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2002 (XIII of 2002) or in any other law for the time being enforced shall have the same meanings as assigned to them in the respective laws and rules made thereunder.

3. Responsibility of the Authority.- (1) After six months of the commencement of this Act, the Government shall not allow to broadcast any news bulletin on the national broadcaster, state or private run electronic media, private television channels, Cable TV or any other broadcast media without **Pakistan Sign Language** interpreters.

(2) After one year of the commencement of this Act, the Government shall not allow to broadcast any program, entertainment, advertisement, talk show, drama, film or any other pictorial segment on the national broadcaster, media, private television channels, Cable TV or any other broadcast media without **Pakistan Sign Language** interpreters.

4. Appointment of the **Pakistan Sign Language** interpreters.- The Government and private owned media houses, within six months, shall appoint **Pakistan Sign Language** interpreters for carrying out the purposes of this Act.

5. Establishment of National Policy Board.- (1) The Government, after the commencement of this Act, within three months, shall constitute a Board to be known as the National Policy Board for the purposes of the access of media through **Pakistan Sign Language** to deaf persons.

(2) The Board shall consist of-

- (a) Minister-in-Charge; Chairperson
- (b) Secretary of the Division concerned; Member
- (c) two members from the Senate, one each from government and opposition; Member

- (d) two members from the National Assembly, one each from government and opposition; Member
- (e) Chief Executive or head of National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine (NIRM) Member
- (f) one representative from Division concerned not below the rank of Joint Secretary; Member
- (g) Chairman of the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority; Member
- (h) one representative from Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training not below the rank of Joint Secretary; Member
- (i) one representative of the Division concerned not below the rank of Joint Secretary (BPS-20). Member
- (j) representatives from the Deaf community in Pakistan, as nominated by the deaf. Member**
- (k) representatives from organizations serving the Deaf community. Number of hearing representatives from these organization should not exceed 10% of the number of deaf representatives allocated in clause (j). Member**

(3) The member as clause (i) shall act as secretary of the Board as well.

(4) The Board shall co-opt any person as member.

(5) The secretariat of the Board shall be at main office of the Authority.

6. Procedure for transaction of business.- (1) The Board shall meet regularly at such time as the Chairperson thinks fit, but at least once in every six months.

(2) All decisions at a meeting shall be taken by majority: