

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
House Bill No. **6118**



Introduced by **Hon. ROSANNA "RIA" V. VERGARA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Unlike radio and television, the Internet is an interactive medium that requires users to actively seek a particular site or application and directly engage with its content. This personal interactivity is precisely what draws people to this new medium of information, interaction, expression, and entertainment.

Of the many features of the internet, online gaming emerged to be one of the most popular applications among the youth. With millions of young people around the world spending several hours a day playing online games, the ever-expanding role and impact of online gaming industry in our society cannot be denied. In 2017, the estimated global revenue of gaming industry is USD 108.9 Billion, fifty percent (50%) of which comes from Asia.¹

With the enormous expansion of the industry, developers churn out games by the thousands, each vying for the attention of online gamers who are mostly minors. As designed, each new one is bigger, louder, more violent, and more addictive than its precursor, with story lines that appeal to the violent and prurient interests of the youth and take advantage of their gullibility and susceptibility to external influence in their formative years.

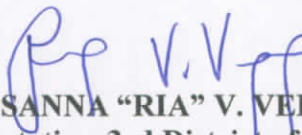
Although internet games are not without beneficial effects, numerous studies have demonstrated the nefarious effects of excessive exposure to violent online games. Brain research (Bushman & Sestir, 2006) shows that players exposed to violent media manifest reduction in healthy, emphatic responses to real-life violence and that these reduced brain response led to increased aggressive behaviour in later tasks.² In addition, online video games have become an alarming platform for unregulated gambling where minors are encouraged to spend money they do not have.

¹ Emma McDonald. *THE GLOBAL GAMES MARKET WILL REACH \$108.9 BILLION IN 2017 WITH MOBILE TAKING 42%*. Newzoo Market Study. 20 April 2017.

² Bartholow, B., Bushman, B., & Sestir, M. (2006, July). Chronic violent video game exposure and desensitization to violence: Behavioral and event-related brain potential data. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 42(4), 532-539.

1 It is for this reason that this bill seeks to create and mandate a Board attached to the
2 Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) to: 1) review and classify
3 online video games according to age-suitability and appropriateness and their content description
4 in order to empower parents to properly monitor the gaming activities of their children and to
5 guide the stakeholders (gamers, parents, producers, distributors, internet cafe and computer shop
6 operators, government, and other entities involved in online gaming industry) as to who may
7 access, buy, use or play a particular online video game; and 2) provide penalties for non-
8 compliance with or violation of such review and classification.
9

The early deliberation and adoption of this measure is thus earnestly requested.


ROSANNA "RIA" V. VERGARA
Representative, 3rd District of Nueva Ecija

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session
House Bill No. — **6118**

Introduced by **Hon. ROSANNA “RIA” V. VERGARA**

1
2 AN ACT MANDATING THE CLASSIFICATION OF INTERNET GAMES
3 CREATING FOR THE PURPOSE THE
4 INTERNET GAMES REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOARD
5 AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR
6
7

8 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress*
9 *assembled:*
10

11
12 **Section 1.** *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*INTERNET GAMES REVIEW AND*
13 *CLASSIFICATION ACT.*”
14

15 **Section 2.** *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to:
16

17 a. Promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-
18 being of the youth in recognition of the vital role they play in nation-building;
19

20 b. Support the primary right and duty of parents in rearing the youth for civic
21 efficiency and the development of their moral character through education;
22

23 c. Give priority to education, science and technology, arts, culture, and sports to
24 foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human
25 liberation and development;
26

27 d. Support and strengthen communication and information recognizing their vital
28 role in nation-building; and
29

e. Consequently, to ensure that all stakeholders, especially the youth, greatly benefit from the advances in technology and at the same time protected from the various dangers and risks arising from its unregulated use, especially in the area of video gaming, by classifying and regulating online video games.

Section 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following are hereby defined as follows:

1. *Video Game*- A game played by electronically manipulating images produced by a computer program on a television screen or other electronic display screen.
2. *Internet Game* – Refers to an online video game that is either partially or primarily played through the Internet or a computer network.³
3. *Internet Café*- A place or establishment which provides computer hardware with internet access to the public, usually for a fee.
4. *DICT* – Refers to the Department of Information and Communication Technology created by virtue of Republic Act No. 10844.
5. *IGRCB* – Refers to the Internet Game Review and Classification Board created under Section 4 of this Act.

Section 4. Creation and Functions of IGRCB. - There is hereby created an Internet Game Review and Classification Board (IGRCB) attached to the DICT. The primary mandate of IGRCB is to review and classify internet games and to ensure that such classification shall be followed as to access and use by and availability to the public. For this purpose, the IGRCB shall have the following powers and functions:⁴

- a) To review, examine, and classify internet games into age-appropriate categories and according to certain content categories, with reference to local and international standards, as the IGRCB may determine for the public interest;

³ Andrew Rollings; Ernest Adams (2006). *Fundamentals of Game Design*. Prentice Hall.

⁴ These functions are patterned after the functions of Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) as provided for in P.D.1986.

- 1 b) To restrict access of the public to internet games through review and classification;
2
- 3 c) To cause the closure of internet cafes or computer shops and other similar establishments
4 engaged in activities which violate the provisions of this Act and the rules and regulations
5 promulgated by the IGRCB;
6
- 7 d) To coordinate and call the assistance or deputize and designate representatives from any
8 branch, department, instrumentality or agency of government and from the online gaming
9 industry and the various associations in the information and communication technology
10 sector in order to ensure compliance with the provisions of this Act relative to the access,
11 availability, copying, distribution, sale, or lease of internet games;
12
- 13 The IGRCB may also call on any law enforcement agency or the local government unit
14 concerned for assistance in the implementation and enforcement of its decisions, orders or
15 awards pursuant to the provisions of this Act;
16
- 17 e) To file cases against violators of the provision/s of this Act, and other laws or regulations
18 pertinent to online video game classification and regulation;
19
- 20 f) To prescribe the necessary and appropriate rules of procedure for the exercise of its
21 powers and functions as well as the performance of its duties and responsibilities to accord
22 and ensure due process of law; and
23
- 24 g) To exercise such powers and functions as may be necessary or incidental to the
25 attainment of the purposes and objectives of this Act, and to perform such other related duties
26 and responsibilities as may be directed by the DICT Secretary.
27

28 Any decision, judgment or order of the IGRCB pursuant to the provisions of this Act shall be
29 final and executory. An aggrieved party may question such decision, judgment or order of the
30 IGRCB pursuant to the applicable provisions of the Rules of Court.
31

32 The IGRCB shall be composed of a chairperson and two (2) members who shall be an
33 information technology expert or a person who has been engaged in the business or practice
34 of information technology for at least five (5) years, a child psychologist and a member of the

Philippine Bar in good standing. The chairperson and members of the IGRCB shall be appointed by the President for a term of six (6) years.

The IGRCB shall likewise have its own Secretariat which shall be headed by an Executive Director to be appointed by the Board on a co-terminus basis.

Section 5. *Duties of an Internet Service Provider (ISP).* - All ISPs shall inform and submit to the IGRCB all internet games not yet reviewed and classified by the IGRCB. No internet game shall be made available to the public without such prior review and classification.

Section 6. *Duties of Internet Café Operators.* - No internet cafe operators shall make available for access or play any internet games which have not yet been reviewed and classified by the IGRCB pursuant to the provisions of this Act or its Implementing Rules and Regulations; and, no internet games which have been reviewed and classified by the IGRCB for a certain age group shall be made available for access or play to persons not belonging to the said age group.

Section 7. *Mandatory Registration with IGRCB.* - All internet cafés in the country shall be required to register with the IGRCB. Said registration shall be a requirement for the issuance and renewal of business permits of internet cafes by the local government units.

Section 8. *Authority to Monitor Internet Café.* - The IGRCB, concurrently with local government units, is likewise vested with the authority to monitor internet cafes, shops or other similar establishments for purposes of compliance with its review and classification powers pursuant to this Act.

Section 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The IGRCB, in coordination with the DICT, the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Department of Education (DepEd), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the National Youth Commission (NYC) and the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for the proper implementation and the accomplishment of the purposes and objectives of this Act.

1 **Section 10. *Penalty.*** – Any person who shall provide access to internet games in violation of
2 IGRCB's classification and violates Sections 5 and 6 of this Act shall, upon conviction, be
3 punished by imprisonment of three (3) months and one day to one (1) year imprisonment or a
4 fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P 50,000.00) but not more than Three Hundred
5 Thousand Pesos (P 300,000.00) or both at the discretion of the court.

6
7 If the offender is an alien, he shall be deported immediately after serving sentence.
8

9 The license to operate the internet cafe or computer shop, or to engage in any business
10 involving internet games shall also be revoked permanently.
11

12 Should the offense be committed by a juridical person, the chairperson, the president,
13 secretary, treasurer, or the officer or shareholder responsible therefor, shall be the persons
14 penalized.
15

16 **Section 11. *Appropriations.*** – To carry out the provisions of this Act, the amount necessary
17 is hereby appropriated out of the certified available funds in the DICT annual budget or any
18 other agency of government, as determined by the Department of Budget and Management,
19 not otherwise used or allocated. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the
20 continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations
21 Act.
22

23 **Section 12. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid, the other
24 provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.
25

26 **Section 13. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees or rules inconsistent with the provisions of
27 this Act are hereby amended, repealed or modified accordingly.
28

29 **Section 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after completion of its
30 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
31

32 Approved.