

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session
HOUSE BILL No. **9035**



Introduced by **KABATAAN Partylist Representative Sarah Jane I. Elago**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

With technological developments, we already live in a society that is "media saturated, technologically dependent, and globally connected."¹ Media is treated not as a parrot of information, but also as an influencer of public opinion. For this reason, the role and importance of media is a double-edged sword and calls for a more critically-minded public.

Being less reliant on print media with the accessible online news, the public are exposed to various information, may it be truthful or not. Without thorough assessment and fact-checking, it is no longer unacceptable to say that the public is exposed to a wide variety of news, the truthfulness of which ranging from most reliable to most questionable. How the Duterte administration spent about PhP 10-million, according to a study of the University of Oxford, only proves how media can now be used for propaganda and spreading false information.

The dangers of historical revisionism, not only in *memes* or informal posts but also in history books used in schools, have also become more apparent. To erase the struggle of the Filipino people by allowing the students and the youth to absorb incomplete, or worse, false, information, is a disgrace to the martyrs of the struggle for genuine democracy.

While media literacy is a core subject in the Kindergarten to 12 (K-12) program of the government, it is not mandatorily provided in all schools. Moreover, the curriculum itself treats an individual as a passive receiver of information given by media, obviously ignoring the role of an individual as a contributor to media, especially online. Other than media-related courses in the tertiary level of education, many students do not receive any education on media literacy.

It is, therefore, the strong recommendation of this representation to have a mandatory course not only on media literacy, but on **critical media literacy**, defined by Kellner and Share (2007) as:

"The type of critical media literacy that we propose includes aspects of the three previous models, but focuses on ideology critique and analyzing the politics of representation of crucial dimensions of gender, race, class, and sexuality; incorporating alternative media production; and expanding textual analysis to include issues of social context, control, resistance, and pleasure.

"A critical media literacy approach also expands literacy to include information literacy, technical literacy, multimodal literacy, and other attempts to broaden print literacy concepts to include different tools and modes of communicating (Kellner, 1998). In addition to these elements, critical media literacy brings an understanding of ideology, power, and domination that challenges relativist and apolitical notions of most media education in order to guide teachers and students in their explorations of how power and information are always linked. This approach embraces the notion of the audience as active in the process of making meaning, as a cultural struggle between dominant readings, oppositional readings or negotiated readings (Ang, 2002; Hall, 1980)."²

The creation of a critical media literacy curriculum, in accordance with the growth and understanding not only of high school students but even primary/elementary students will help in cultivating a more informed and well-educated public not only to combat the surge of false information in the wake of technological advancements but also in developing critical thinking skills at a very young age.

This representation earnestly seeks the passage of this bill at the most immediate possible time. Let this be a model for the international community, a step closer to a more informed, dynamic, and critical public crucial for democracy.

Rep. Sarah Jane I. Elago
Kabataan Party-list

¹ Kellner, D., & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy, democracy, and the reconstruction of education. In D. Macedo & S.R. Steinberg (Eds.), *Media literacy: A reader* (pp. 3-23). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.

² Douglas, K. & Share, J. (2007). Critical media literacy is not an option. *Springer Science + Business Media, LLC* 2007.

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 9035

Introduced by **KABATAAN Partylist Representative SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

AN ACT PROMOTING CRITICAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE PHILIPPINES AND PRESCRIBING ITS MANDATORY INCLUSION IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES, FOR SUCH OTHER PURPOSES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. -- This Act shall be known as the "Critical Media Literacy Act of 2018".

TITLE I
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to integrate the development of critical media literacy among Filipinos at an early age (1) to develop an understanding of media, whether mainstream or alternative, and its importance in sharing opinion, and (2) to create an environment conducive for critical thinking by raising awareness on how to combat false and misleading information being circulated in different forms of media.

All programs to be implemented and curriculum to be developed shall duly promote and safeguard the fundamental freedom of speech and expression, and shall be guided by the following principles of critical media literacy education:

- a) Media is a **COMPETENT TOOL**. While media is commonly used in archiving information, it is also a tool for critical analysis of various social issues. It can be used to both inform the masses and to shape public opinion;
- b) Media is **EVOLVING**. With the continuing development of technology, media has become more accessible. As a result, the majority of information the people receive now come less from printed material, and more typically from various online sources;
- c) Media is produced in **DIFFERENT MODES**. Media is produced in two manners: mainstream and alternative. It is important for the public to discern between the two, having been produced with different angles;
- d) Media **DOES NOT EXIST IN A VACCUUM**. It is neither relativist nor apolitical. All contents produced, whether mainstream or alternative, and in whatever form, are influenced by political and societal conditions.

TITLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. --

- a) *Alternative Media* refers to media (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.) contents that fall outside the mainstream or dominant contents. Alternative media contents are progressive, critical, pro-people and free from business and corporate interests. They are usually produced and distributed independently.
- b) *Basic Education* encompasses kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education, as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs.³
- c) *Critical Media Literacy* is educational response that expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies. It deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this mainstream analysis, alternative media production empowers students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives.⁴

³ Section 3, Republic Act No. 10533.

⁴ Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share:

- d) *Literacy* involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret, produce texts and artifacts, and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society.
- e) *Media Literacy* provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of media forms (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.)

Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Media literacy, therefore, is about helping students become competent, critical, and literate in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see or hear rather than letting the interpretation control them. To become media literate is not to memorize facts or statistics about the media, but rather to learn to raise the right questions about what you are watching, reading, or listening to.

TITLE III SCOPE OF MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

SECTION 4. Scope. -- All Filipinos starting from grade level one shall receive critical media literacy education, the curriculum being adjusted based on child development and his/her capacity to understand.

TITLE IV PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

SECTION 7. Program Development. -- Alternative media networks, such as *Altermidya* (People's Alternative Media Network) which is a network of independent and progressive media outfits, institutions and individuals, have the responsibility to develop various programs, including but not limited to fora, focused group discussions, integration with media outlets, and consultations with media outlets and students, in order to develop a critical-minded public. These programs should require the youth and students of critical media literacy education to enhance their understanding of the principles set forward in Section 2.

SECTION 8. Curriculum Development and Review. -- All existing curricula that already include critical media literacy shall be reviewed and amended by alternative media networks, while all schools, universities, and colleges that do not have a curriculum on critical media literacy and information shall develop one. All curricula shall adhere to the principles of critical media literacy education as set forth in Section 2.

SECTION 9. Curriculum Implementation. -- DepEd and/or CHED, as applicable, in coordination with the other agencies and departments set forth in Section 4, including stakeholders, such as student and faculty representatives of schools, colleges, and universities, and media practitioners should be able to develop, revise, or improve the curriculum on critical media literacy and information within six (6) months after the effectivity of the law.

SECTION 10. Capacity-building and Training. -- Alternative media networks, and (1) non-government organizations that advocate for critical media literacy and information, (2) mainstream and alternative media outlets, (3) nationwide alliances of student councils and publications, and (4) nationwide alliances of teachers or professors and their unions, shall create appropriate programs for teachers, professors, or instructors who teach critical media literacy and information at all levels.

TITLE V MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 11. Rules and Regulations. — The Department of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. Appropriations. — The amounts necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the agencies. Thereafter, the amounts necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 13. Separability Clause. — If for any reason any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause. — Any laws, decrees, or laws, decrees, or rules and regulations which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or repealed.

SECTION 15. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,