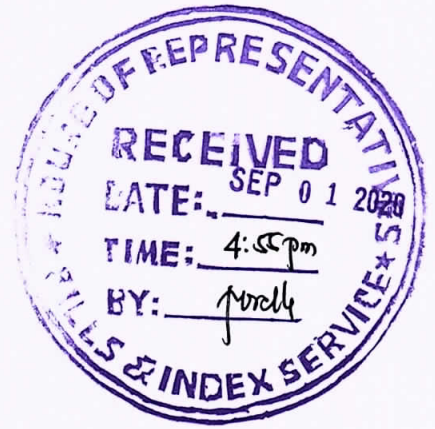


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 7568



Introduced by HON. ALETA C. SUAREZ

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Libraries have been the primary source of information by students back in the day. However, as we immerse in the digital era, finding and disseminating information have become easier with just a click of a button. The world wide web serves as a means to obtain information instantly. Latest technological developments in the internet and telecommunications have undoubtedly been a greatly help to learning within and outside schools.

In spite of this, the value of libraries as the heart of reliable information remains the same. Having an organized repository of books, full text references, and other research materials is important and beneficial to facilitate learning. Hence, establishing online libraries prove to be as valuable as having physical libraries today. Online libraries ensure accessible and available information, even in remote areas, as long as there is internet access. However, there is a dearth of available and accessible learning materials, particularly books, for students in the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels. Our online databases do not contain as much materials as that of our physical libraries. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that shifting to digital platforms allows us to adapt to emergency and crisis situations, especially where mobility of people are limited.

This bill is filed to help transition to the digital age by digitizing books and other reference materials relevant to the education of our youth. The establishment of the Philippine Online Library and access to electronic copies of books, students and educators alike will be able to continue learning activities even in the safety of their homes. This will help alleviate the fears of the parents and teachers regarding the lack of materials for the students even in the midst of a pandemic, wherever they may be in the country. In the long run, as technology further advances, learning will not be as difficult in any given time as long as there is access to the internet.

In view of the foregoing, the approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Suarez', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

HON. ALETA C. SUAREZ

Representative

Third District, Quezon Province

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **7568**

Introduced by HON. ALETA C. SUAREZ

1 **AN ACT**
2 **DIGITALIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND**
3 **ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY, PROVIDING FUNDS**
4 **THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

6 **SECTION 1. Short Title** - This Act shall be known as the "Philippine Online
7 Library Act."

8 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy** - It shall be the policy of the State to promote the
9 moral and intellectual well-being of the people, and ensure that its citizens are
10 computer literate and are provided access to an increasingly digitized world. The State
11 shall provide its citizens with the opportunity to increase their adaptability with
12 information and communications technology, and to enhance their learning experience
13 by providing access to digitized copies of textbooks necessary for the provision of
14 quality primary and secondary education.

15 **SEC. 3. *Philippine Online Library*** - The Department of Education shall create a
16 digitized copy of all existing textbooks and reference books it deems necessary for the
17 public education of Philippine elementary and secondary students. This shall be
18 compiled in the Philippine Online Library which shall be jointly managed by the
19 Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Information and
20 Communications Technology (DICT).

21 **SEC. 4. *Mandatory Digitization of Textbooks***. - The DepEd, in coordination with
22 the National Book Development Board and the National Library of the Philippines,
23 shall require persons or enterprises involved in book development and publishing to
24 submit a digitized copy of books intended for educational purposes for primary and
25 secondary levels. Individuals and/or enterprises engaged in book publishing registered
26 with the National Book Development Board shall submit digitized copies of such books
27 within one (1) year after the effectivity of this Act. Entities applying for International
28 Standard Book Number Registration on such books with the National Library of the
29 Philippines shall likewise submit a digitized copy of the book during registration.

30 **SEC. 5. *Provision for Access to the Digitized Copies of Textbooks***. - The
31 Department of Education shall ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks by
32 providing computers to all primary and secondary public schools nationwide.

33 Similarly, in order to ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks, DICT
34 shall provide fast and reliable internet access to each primary and secondary public
35 school.

36 **SEC. 6. *Recycling of Computers*** - In order to offset expenses related to the
37 procurement of computers necessary for the immediate execution of the provisions of
38 this Act, national government agencies, government-owned and controlled
39 corporations, and other government financial institutions which shall procure new
40 computers shall endorse their old units to DICT to check if the computers can still be

used for the intent of this Act and afterwards shall be given to DepEd for deployment to primary and secondary public schools nationwide.

SEC. 7. *Additional Online Educational Materials* - The Department of Education can tap the National Library of the Philippines to complement the Philippine Online Library's digital repository of textbooks with additional materials that are representative of Filipino culture and Literature. DepEd shall also be allowed to add other online materials that it deems necessary for expanding the learning opportunities for students.

SEC. 8. *Custody over Digitized Copies of Textbooks* - DepEd and the National Library of the Philippines shall have joint custody over the digitized copies of the textbooks. DICT shall likewise ensure the technological management of the digital repository to ensure the integrity of the system.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations* - The initial amount of Five Hundred Million (Php 500,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this act and shall be jointly managed by the Department of Education and by the Department of Information and Communications Technology. An annual budget of One Hundred Million (Php 100,000,00.00) will be included in the annual budget of the Department of Education to make sure that the computers and internet connection of public schools for the purpose of this Act will be maintained.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations* - The Department of Education, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, National Library of the Philippines, and the National Book Development Board shall have joint responsibility over the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary for the effective execution and enforcement of this Act. They shall do so in close coordination with the Department of Science and Technology, and other stakeholders. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be released within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act.

68 **SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules
69 and regulations, and parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act
70 are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

71 **SEC. 12. *Separability Clause*** - If, for any reason, any section or provision of this
72 Act, or any portion thereof, or the application of such section, provision, or portion to
73 any person, group, or circumstance is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the
74 remainder of this Act or the application of such section, provision, or portion thereof to
75 other persons, groups, or circumstances shall not be affected by such declaration.

76 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its
77 publication in three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

78 Approved.