

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Quezon City
NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 10307



Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
HON. EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE OPERATIONS OF ONLINE COCKFIGHTING OR E-SABONG
AND ANY RELATED GAMING ACTIVITY PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR
VIOLATION THEREOF

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill aims to prohibit online cockfighting operations in the country, commonly known as e-sabong, and establish penalties for those who violate thereof. It also seeks to amend certain laws to align them with the proposed prohibition.

Sabong is historically part of Filipino tradition that dates as early as 3,000 years ago. The game is placing two roosters in an arena and wage which of the two comes out as a winner. The odds of winning are high because there are only two sides to bet on.

Today the latest state-of-the-art version of the gaming activity is called e-Sabong. It is online off-site wagering on live cockfighting matches and streamed live from the cockpit arena.

The game has become so popular at the height of the pandemic when people are at home and have no other pastimes. But the activity is more than an amusement because money is involved.

E-Sabong is a multi-billion revenue source of the government regulated by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) under the office of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice.

However, it is unfortunate that this revenue-generating gaming activity of the State has silent evil effects on people's lives. A lot of Filipinos fall prey to this online gambling business. That can ultimately lead to bankruptcy, crime, personal health issues, and family conflict.

On December 28, 2022, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. issued Executive Order (EO) No. 9, directing the continued suspension of e-sabong operations nationwide. EO 9 prohibits live-streaming cockfights outside designated areas and

online betting on live matches, irrespective of the betting platform's location. This mandate is grounded on public health, moral integrity, safety, and social welfare.

Corollary to prohibiting the operation of *e-sabong*, all permits and licenses of *e-sabong* operators issued by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) are declared invalid. PAGCOR is directed to account any financial obligation due to and from *e-sabong* operators. Likewise, the Cybercrime Division of the National Bureau of Investigation, Anti-Cybercrime Group of the Philippine National Police and other law enforcement agencies are directed to monitor and block any existing and emerging *e-sabong* websites.

In view of the foregoing and to save the public from the destructive effects of heavy online gambling, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. C. Villanueva', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

HON. EDUARDO "BRO EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA

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

SECTION 1. It is unlawful for any person to commit any of the following prohibited acts:

- (a) Any online, remote, or off-site wagering or betting on live cockfighting matches, events, and activities streamed or broadcasted live from cockpit arenas or premises where the activity is being held;
- (b) Transmit, place, or receive online betting on live-streaming cockfights or broadcasting of live cockfighting matches, events, or activities through online or other remote mode of betting; or
- (c) Any platform operating e-sabong betting online.

For the purposes of this discussion, online or e-sabong refers to the act of betting on cockfights through digital platforms, which allow users to wager on the outcome of fights remotely. This is distinct from traditional cockfighting, which occurs in a physical arena or cockpit. The key distinction here is that e-sabong utilizes an electronic or digital system, or platform, to facilitate betting on cockfights, removing the need to physically attend the event. This system or platform processes wagers placed on the fights using remote electronic devices or off-site betting stations.

SEC 2. Any person who violates Section 1 of this Act shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than One (1) year but not more than twelve (20) years, or a fine of not less than three hundred thousand (P300,000.00) but not more than Five million pesos (P5,000,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court. If the offender is an operator of *e-sabong* betting platform, the maximum penalty prescribed shall be imposed.

If the offender is a corporation or an association, the president, manager, managing partner, or any officer of the corporation or association who directly participated in the violation of Section 1 of this Act shall be held liable.

If the offender is a public officer, the public officer shall be dismissed from the service and perpetually disqualified from holding public office. In addition, the public officer shall also be held administratively liable under existing laws, rules, and regulations.

SEC 3. All permits and licenses of *e-sabong* operators issued by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) are declared invalid and the PAGCOR shall make an accounting of any financial obligation due to and from *e-sabong* operators. No permits or licenses for the operation of *e-sabong* may be issued by PAGCOR upon the effectivity of this Act.

The Cybercrime Division of the National Bureau of Investigation, Anti-Cybercrime Group of the Philippine National Police, and other law enforcement agencies shall monitor and block all existing and emerging *e-sabong* websites.

SEC 4. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Chairperson of the PAGCOR shall, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government, Chief of the Philippine National Police and Director of the National Bureau of Investigation, issue the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC 5. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,