

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **11178**



Introduced by: **Hon. Margarita “Atty. Migs” B. Nograles-Almario and
Hon. Cheeno Miguel D. Almario**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Elections are the backbone of our democracy, allowing the people to choose their leaders freely and fairly. However, in recent years, the rise of troll farms and the spread of false information have become a serious threat to this process. These organized groups and individuals deliberately create and spread lies about political candidates to damage reputations and mislead voters. Freedom of Speech is a right guaranteed by the Constitution but it shall be exercised properly. According to Section 19 of International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which the Philippines is a state-party of, the exercise of this freedom must be restricted if it causes disrespect or damages the reputation of others, or if there is a need to protect national security or public order. The utilization of troll farms to disrupt free elections is a matter of security and public safety. Such actions not only harm the targeted candidates but also undermine the trust of the public in the electoral process. This bill seeks to protect the integrity of our elections by criminalizing troll farms and penalizing those who spread false information to unfairly influence the outcome of elections.

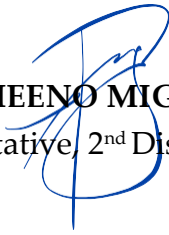
This proposed legislation is rooted in the belief that the truth should prevail in any election. By holding accountable those who deliberately spread lies—whether through troll farms, vloggers, or other channels—and by penalizing candidates who knowingly benefit from these actions, we can ensure a level playing field for all. This bill also aims to empower our law enforcement agencies and the Commission on Elections to actively monitor and investigate these harmful practices. Moreover, it recognizes the role of online platforms in preventing the spread of disinformation and holds them responsible for swift action.

At its core, this bill is about protecting the voters. Filipinos deserve to base their decisions on facts, not lies or propaganda. By making troll farms and election-related disinformation punishable by law, we are taking a stand for truth, fairness, and democracy. This legislation is a step toward restoring public trust in our electoral system and ensuring that future elections reflect the genuine will of the people.



HON. MARGARITA "ATTY. MIGS" B. NOGRALES-ALMARIO

Representative, PBA Partylist



HON. CHEENO MIGUEL D. ALMARIO

Representative, 2nd District of Davao Oriental

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AN ACT
CRIMINALIZING THE OPERATION OF TROLL FARMS AND THE
DELIBERATE CREATION AND DISSEMINATION OF FALSE INFORMATION
AGAINST POLITICAL CANDIDATES TO UNDULY BENEFIT OPPONENTS,
AND PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Troll Farm and Election Disinformation Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - The State recognizes the importance of free and fair elections as the foundation of democracy. It is the policy of the State to uphold the integrity of electoral processes by preventing and penalizing the deliberate creation and dissemination of false information and the operation of troll farms aimed at influencing public opinion against political candidates.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

1. Troll Farm – Any organized group or entity composed of at least two (2) individuals, whether physical or virtual, that systematically creates, amplifies, or disseminates disinformation, hate speech, or propaganda for the purpose of manipulating public opinion, undermining political competition, or influencing elections.

2. Troll – A person or entity who produces and publishes video content online, especially through social media platforms in relation to the prohibited acts mentioned in Section 4 of this law.
3. Disinformation – The deliberate creation, publication, or dissemination of false or misleading information intended to deceive the public.
4. Electoral Disinformation – Disinformation specifically targeting a political candidate to create undue advantage for their opponent during an electoral process.
5. Hate Speech – Any form of expression through which the speaker intends to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against an individual, or group which he/she belongs to, on the basis of his/her/their race, religion, skin color, sexual identity, ethnicity, disability, or political affiliation.
6. Political Competition – An individual or a group which is publicly known to be competing, will compete, or competed, for an elective position.
7. Undue Advantage – The unfair benefit or gain derived by a political candidate or party from acts of disinformation that undermine or discredit an opponent.

SEC. 4. Prohibited Acts. - The following acts are prohibited under this Act:

1. Operation of Troll Farms:
 - a. Establishing, maintaining, or operating a troll farm to disseminate disinformation against an individual.
 - b. Funding, sponsoring, or collaborating with troll farms to produce or spread false information.
2. Creation and Dissemination of Electoral Disinformation:
 - a. Producing, publishing, or amplifying false or misleading information about a political candidate with the intent to damage their reputation or candidacy.
 - b. Employing vloggers, influencers, or other individuals to disseminate false information for political advantage.
3. Collusion for Disinformation:
 - a. Colluding with or directing third parties, including media outlets, vloggers, or organizations, to create and spread disinformation against a candidate.

SEC. 5. Penalties. -

1. For Individuals:

a. Any individual found guilty of operating a troll farm or creating and disseminating disinformation as defined in this Act shall be punished with:

i. Imprisonment of six (6) to twelve (12) years; and

ii. A fine of not less than ₱500,000 but not more than ₱2,000,000.

b. If the offender is a vlogger, influencer, or media personality, the penalty shall be increased by one degree.

2. For Political Candidates:

a. Any political candidate found to have knowingly benefited from the prohibited acts shall be disqualified from running for office, in addition to the penalties prescribed in this Act.

3. For Organizations or Troll Farms:

a. Any organization found guilty of operating troll farms or systematically disseminating disinformation shall be penalized with:

i. A fine of not less than ₱5,000,000 but not more than ₱10,000,000;

ii. Permanent revocation of business permits and licenses, if applicable.

4. Accessory Penalties:

a. Confiscation and destruction of all equipment, tools, and software used in the operation of troll farms.

b. Suspension of access to online platforms used to spread disinformation.

SEC. 6. Election-Related Aggravating Circumstance. - The commission of any prohibited act during the election period shall be considered an aggravating circumstance and shall merit the maximum penalty provided under this Act.

SEC. 7. Role of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). - The COMELEC, in coordination with the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), and the Philippine National Police-Anti-

Cybercrime Group (PNP-ACG), shall establish a dedicated task force to investigate, monitor, and prosecute violations of this Act.

SEC. 8. Role of Online Platforms. -

1. Online platforms hosting content from vloggers and other individuals shall have a duty to cooperate with law enforcement agencies in identifying and removing disinformation related to elections.
2. Failure of online platforms to act within 24 hours of a verified complaint regarding disinformation shall result in fines ranging from ₱1,000,000 to ₱5,000,000 per violation.

SEC. 9. Whistleblower Protection. - Whistleblowers who report troll farm activities or disinformation campaigns shall be protected under the “Whistleblower Protection Act of 2021” or any related legislation.

SEC. 10. Education and Awareness Campaigns. - The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall implement programs to educate the public on recognizing and combating disinformation.

SEC. 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR). - Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Justice (DOJ), in coordination with the COMELEC and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary IRR.

SEC. 12. If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 13. All laws, decrees, executive orders, and other issuances inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 14. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,