



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

House Bill No. 11515



Introduced by Representative **GERALDINE B. ROMAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines today stands at the critical intersection of digital freedom and digital responsibility. While social media has empowered millions to speak, connect, and mobilize, it has also become a potent tool for the unchecked spread of falsehoods, hatred, and manipulation—undermining public trust, damaging reputations, and threatening the health of our democratic institutions.

Disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation are no longer mere nuisances—they are national threats. Yet traditional instruments of state regulation are insufficient, and overly aggressive state control risks undermining freedom of expression, a fundamental right enshrined in our Constitution.

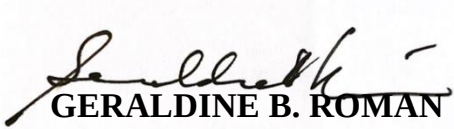
This bill seeks a democratic middle ground by recognizing the Digital Media Standards Coalition (DMSC)—a non-governmental, non-partisan, and independently governed body—as a trusted ethical authority in digital platform governance. The DMSC does not regulate like the State, nor does it act in service of any commercial interest. Instead, it functions as a moral compass: a values-driven, data-informed coalition that platforms and government can turn to for ethical guidance on digital content disputes, especially around disinformation, misinformation, and malinformation.

The proposed measure draws inspiration from respected industry-led initiatives such as the Ad Standards Council (ASC) in the advertising sector and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP) in traditional broadcast media. Like these bodies, the DMSC operates on the principle that ethical governance and civic responsibility must come from within the industry, guided by public trust, transparency, and independent oversight—not imposed by government fiat.

At the same time, the bill mandates platforms to establish a legal presence in the Philippines, maintain a registry of verified user accounts (within privacy protections), and adhere to binding directives issued by the DMSC—thus ensuring both ethical accountability and enforceable cooperation in combating digital harms.

This measure is not designed to silence voices, but to amplify the truth. We must ensure that our digital spaces remain venues of constructive dialogue—not chaos; of truth—not toxicity.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Geraldine B. Roman", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

GERALDINE B. ROMAN

Representative, First District of Bataan

Chairperson, Committee on Women and Gender Equality



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AN ACT

RECOGNIZING THE DIGITAL MEDIA STANDARDS COALITION AS AN INDEPENDENT FACT-CHECKING AND ETHICAL GUIDANCE AUTHORITY, MANDATING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO CONSULT AND ADHERE TO ITS RESOLUTIONS ON DIGITAL CONTENT DISPUTES, AND REQUIRING PLATFORM ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title - This Act shall be known as the “Digital Media Integrity and Platform Accountability Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy - The State recognizes the transformative power of digital media in shaping public discourse, fostering civic participation, and enabling democratic expression. In an increasingly interconnected and information-saturated society, digital platforms have become the new medium through which the public obtains information in lieu of traditional media. Digital media have also become the most accessible and sought-after public square where opinions are expressed and exchanged, and where public opinion is shaped.

The veracity, however, of the information disseminated through digital media goes oftentimes unchecked. The propagation of disinformation and malinformation poses a serious danger to individuals and to society as a whole due to the reach and popularity of social media. As such, with this power, comes a compelling responsibility to safeguard truth, protect vulnerable communities, and ensure that the digital sphere remains a space for meaningful, respectful, and inclusive dialogue.

It is therefore the policy of the State to promote a safe, ethical, and rights-based digital information environment, where freedom of expression is protected, celebrated, and empowered, but is not abused to enable disinformation, misinformation, malinformation, hate speech, algorithmic manipulation, and coordinated inauthentic behavior that undermine democratic institutions and social cohesion.

The State affirms that governance of the digital space cannot rest solely on the regulatory powers of government, nor can it be left entirely to the opaque discretion of profit-driven platforms. Instead, a balanced model of shared responsibility is essential, one that engages independent, expert, and values-driven institutions that serve as guardians of digital integrity without becoming instruments of censorship or state control.

To this end, the State recognizes the Digital Media Standards Coalition (DMSC) as a vital third-party authority that offers independent ethical guidance, fact-checking expertise, and public-interest oversight over digital content disputes. The DMSC shall not serve as a regulatory body in the manner of the State, but as an autonomous moral compass and technical arbiter grounded in data, journalistic rigor, and democratic values.

This measure builds upon the foundational contributions of established ethical bodies such as the Advertising Standards Council (ASC) and the Kapisanan ng mga Brodkaster ng Pilipinas (KBP), which have long upheld truth, fairness, and accountability in traditional media and advertising. By recognizing the DMSC, the State extends the same principles of ethical self-regulation and industry-based accountability into the digital space—guided by the same spirit of freedom of speech, editorial independence, and the public good with full recognition of and respect for our basic constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression.

Through this framework, the State and the digital media stakeholders can work hand in hand to build a digital ecosystem that is resilient against manipulation, accountable to the people, and reflective of the highest standards of truth, justice, and democratic dignity.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms - For the purposes of this Act:

- a. Digital Media Standards Coalition (DMSC) refers to a legally registered, independent, non-profit, and non-partisan consortium of associations and groups of content creators, digital advertising and public relations firms, media institutions, fact-checkers, academics, and civil society stakeholders with a self-governing Code of Ethics and internal review mechanisms that serve as a third-party ethical authority on digital media content.
- b. Platform refers to any online intermediary, social networking site, content-sharing service, or communication platform that enables the dissemination of digital content to users in the Philippines.
- c. Disinformation refers to false or misleading information disseminated with the intent to deceive or harm, including coordinated campaigns of fake news, deepfakes, or manipulated narratives.

- d. Misinformation refers to false or inaccurate information that is spread regardless of intent to deceive. While often unintentional, its dissemination can still result in harm to individuals, public trust, or democratic discourse.
- e. Malinformation refers to accurate information that is deliberately conveyed out of context, in a misleading manner, or with the intention to cause harm, including doxing, revenge exposure, or timed publication to incite hate, panic, or reputational damage.
- f. Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) refers to organized efforts by individuals or entities using multiple accounts, fake identities, or bots to mislead or manipulate public discourse online.
- g. Directive refers to a formal advisory, resolution, or binding instruction issued by the DMSC pursuant to a content dispute or platform violation of ethical standards.
- h. Sanction refers to any non-criminal, industry-standard, reputational, or remedial penalty imposed by the DMSC, including content labeling, removal advisories, account suspension advisories, and public notice.
- i. Appeals Mechanism refers to a process established by the DMSC allowing platforms or content creators to challenge or seek reconsideration of decisions.

SECTION 4. Recognition of the Digital Media Standards Coalition

The Digital Media Standards Coalition (DMSC), a legally registered, independent, non-profit, and non-partisan consortium of associations and groups of content creators, digital advertising and public relations firms, media institutions, fact-checkers, academics, and civil society stakeholders with a self-governing Code of Ethics and internal review mechanisms that serve as a third-party ethical authority on digital media content, is hereby formally recognized by the State as the ethical standards authority and third-party expert body in the realm of digital media governance.

The DMSC shall serve as the moral compass and technical guide for digital platforms, regulatory bodies, and other stakeholders with respect to disinformation, misinformation, malinformation, coordinated inauthentic behavior, and other forms of ethically harmful content.

In line with its current mandate and ongoing operations, the DMSC:

- a. Operates independently from government and commercial interests;
- b. Maintains and implements its own Code of Ethics, internal governance policies, and peer-reviewed and expedient fact-checking methodologies;
- c. Functions as a consultative and adjudicatory authority in content disputes and ethical moderation cases;
- d. Upholds principles of transparency, accountability, and non-partisanship in all decisions and directives;

- e. Issues public advisories, binding ethical directives, and reputational sanctions as necessary to preserve the integrity of the digital ecosystem;
- f. Publishes regular findings, decisions, and reports in the interest of public awareness and democratic discourse.
- g. Convey its directives, decisions and resolutions to the social media platforms for corresponding action.

Nothing in this Act shall impair the DMSC's right to self-governance, autonomy in standard-setting, or independence from State control. This recognition shall not be construed as converting the DMSC into a government instrumentality, but shall establish its standing as the trusted, institutional partner of both platforms and the public in digital content governance.

SECTION 5. Platform Compliance and Obligations

All social media platforms operating in the Philippines shall:

- a. Establish and maintain a legal entity or permanent representative office in the Philippines for regulatory and ethical accountability;
- b. Maintain and submit to the DMSC a registry of verified user accounts, subject to the Data Privacy Act of 2012;
- c. Adhere to all binding directives, resolutions, and decisions of the DMSC;
- d. Consult with the DMSC for all escalated content disputes; and,
- e. Provide the DMSC with access to necessary data and technical cooperation for ethical audits.

SECTION 6. Authority and Sanctions of the DMSC

The DMSC shall have the authority to:

- a. Conduct independent investigations on content disputes;
- b. Issue binding directives to platforms on content labeling, removal, or user moderation;
- c. Recommend industry-wide sanctions such as delisting or public reprimand;
- d. Establish a clear and accessible appeals process for disputed decisions;
- e. Collaborate with international fact-checking and oversight institutions.

SECTION 7. Appeals Mechanism

The DMSC shall establish and maintain a fair, timely, and transparent process for appeals and reconsideration of its directives. Platforms, content creators, or affected individuals may submit formal appeals, which shall be resolved within thirty (30) days of filing. Appeals shall be reviewed by an independent ethics review board within the DMSC.

SECTION 8. International Cooperation

The DMSC is authorized to engage in partnerships, data-sharing agreements, and joint initiatives with international bodies such as the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), Global Disinformation Index, and similar transnational organizations for benchmarking, technical training, and ethical alignment.

SECTION 9. Government and Public Sector Cooperation

All government agencies shall recognize the DMSC's role and cooperate in good faith. The DMSC may be consulted in legislative or executive actions involving platform governance, freedom of expression, or online safety.

SECTION 10. Funding and Independence

The DMSC shall not receive direct appropriations from the government. It may receive project-based grants from non-partisan sources, disclosed publicly in annual transparency reports. Independence from political influence shall be preserved at all times.

SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR)

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in consultation with the DMSC and other stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act.

SECTION 12. Separability Clause

If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall not be affected.

SECTION 13. Repealing Clause

All laws, decrees, or regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly

SECTION 14. Effectivity

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,