

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 575

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A SYSTEM FOR E-BOOK PUBLISHING,
EMPOWERMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT ACT (SEPEDA)

EXPLANATORY NOTE

When the pandemic forced schools to swiftly transition to online learning, the dearth of publicly accessible instructional materials in many disciplines and across all levels became more pronounced. Students in elementary and high school, for instance, lost secondary, substitute, and additional reading materials and references that could have helped them in their studies while their teachers were forced to produce modules. Whatever the age, children and youth found themselves with relatively more time than usual—which could have been used as *reading* time were it not for the lack of access to and money for books.

This, when some countries and entities such as the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and even some of our neighbor countries have been providing open-access—that is, free and publicly accessible—electronic books or “e-books” for years before.

In these places, the widest dissemination of knowledge—so essential to quality education and cultivation of a culture of research—is ensured. It is high time for our country to emulate the e-book publishing mindset, especially considering the fact that majority of our students and academics have neither the money to spend for books nor even the space in their homes to place them on. But, doubtless, they have the greatest

potential to imbibe the knowledge from those books and use it to develop themselves, their families, and the nation.

Hopefully, through a vibrant book publishing industry—including an e-book publishing industry—we can raise voracious readers and fervent researchers, first-rate teachers and critical thinkers. This is a long-delayed update and follow-through to what were mandated 28 years ago by Republic Act 8047 or the *Book Publishing Industry Development Act*, such as the “creat[ion of] conditions conducive to development, production, and distribution of books, especially the acquisition and adoption of state-of-the-art technology, equipment, and machineries on book publishing” among “ensur[ing] an adequate, affordable, and accessible supply of books for all segments of the population, to name a few.

This bill will provide for a system that boosts a less expensive means for authors to make public and disseminate their knowledge, and will encourage academics and publishers to publish more open-access books. This is one way of bringing out and elevating state support to Filipino authorship towards greater accessibility to books and learning references, increased quality of education, and a more robust culture of research.

For the foregoing reasons, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-List



Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO
KABATAAN Party-List

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as “*The System for E-Book Publishing, Empowerment, and Development Act*” (SEPEDA).

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* The policy of the State to uphold the vital role of communication and information in nation-building, as enshrined in Article II, Section 24 of the 1987 Constitution, is hereby recognized and implemented.

The policy of the State to promote the continuing development of the book publishing industry, with the active participation of the private sector, to ensure an adequate supply of affordable, quality-produced books, is hereby reiterated.

SEC. 3. *Coverage.* This Act shall cover all public and private publishing enterprises.

SEC. 4. *National Library’s Online E-book Collection.* The National Library is hereby tasked to create and maintain the National Library’s Online E-book Collection, which will be the official repository for all e-books produced under this Act.

SEC. 5. *E-Book Production of Public Publishers.* Public agencies that also function as publishers are hereby mandated to produce open access e-book titles every year.

SEC. 6. *E-Book Production of Private Enterprises.* Private publishing enterprises that would publish at least 20 open access e-book titles every year shall be eligible for tax incentives, subject to this law's implementing rules and regulations.

SEC. 7. *E-Book Production of Individual Authors.* The National Book Development Board (NBDB), in coordination with leading public and private higher education institutions in the country, is hereby mandated to devise a system that would allow individual authors to publish their works as open access e-books, with the NBDB as the publisher.

SEC. 8. *Compensation for Authors of Open Access E-Books Published by Public Agencies, including the NBDB.* Subject to the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, authors shall be given compensation for every open access e-book published.

SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The National Library, the NBDB, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino, and National Commission for Culture and the Arts, in consultation with representatives of teachers' organizations, professional organizations, and publishers shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act not later than ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.* If any part or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provision hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 11. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances, or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or one (1) newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,