

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3034



Introduced by Representative Paolo Henry M. Marcoleta

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In this digital age, access to the internet is no longer a luxury – it is a necessity. The United Nations, particularly in the 2016 Human Rights Council resolution¹, has emphasized the indispensable role of “internet access in exercising freedom of expression, facilitating access to information and protecting other fundamental rights.” In today’s complex era where information technology plays a central role in society, the internet is a platform for culture, education, and economy. It is a vital tool for learning, working, doing business, and staying connected.

In 2021, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies has reported that “despite the widespread cellular phone signal coverage and mobile device ownership, internet usage in the country remains low owing to poor and expensive internet connectivity and inadequate digital infrastructure, especially outside the National Capital Region.”

The Department of Information and Communications Technology is working to address this gap by establishing their target to increase the number of households with internet access nationwide from the current 44% in 2024 to 60% by 2028. Relatedly, their free public Wi-Fi program is “seen to benefit 9.8 million users across 1,401 cities and municipalities, including 3,040 geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.” This issue of access must also simultaneously address affordability.

Internet connectivity is a revolutionary tool that defines income, dignity and access for every citizen. Moreover, the occurrence of natural disasters and

¹ United Nations Human Rights Council. The Promotion, Protection and Enjoyment of Human Rights on the Internet. A/HRC/RES/32/13, 1 July 2016, available at www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/32session/A.HRC.32.L.20.pdf (last accessed on July 07, 2025).

pandemics in the past accelerated the need for internet access in expanding employment with work-from-home options, ensuring learning continuity in shift learning modalities, and assessing up-to-date information for informed decision-making.

This measure aims to establish a lifeline rate for internet access, similar to electricity, in order to ensure assistance to low-income and connectivity-dependent households. It seeks to compliment, support, and build on the goals of Republic Act 10929 or the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act so as to leave no Filipino behind in the digital age.

In recognition of the right to internet access, the immediate approval of this bill is most earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized capital 'P' followed by 'HMM' and a horizontal line with a dot at the end.

PAOLO HENRY M. MARCOLETA
Representative, SAGIP Party-List

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AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A LIFELINE RATE FOR INTERNET SERVICES,
AMENDING FOR THIS PURPOSE SECTION 17 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 7925, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE PUBLIC
TELECOMMUNICATIONS POLICY ACT OF THE PHILIPPINES

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

1 **Section 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Lifeline Rate for*
2 *Internet Services Act*”.

3
4 **Sec. 2. Establishment of Lifeline Rate.** – Section 17 of Republic Act No.
5 7925, otherwise known as the Public Telecommunications Policy Act of the
6 Philippines, is hereby amended to read as follows:

7
8 “Sec. 17. *Rates and Tariffs.* - The Commission shall establish rates
9 and tariffs which are fair and reasonable and which provide for the
10 economic viability of telecommunications entities and a fair return on
11 their investments considering the prevailing cost of capital in the
12 domestic and international markets.

13
14 The Commission shall exempt any specific telecommunications
15 service from its rate or tariff regulations if the service has sufficient

1 competition to ensure fair and reasonable rates or tariffs. The
2 Commission shall, however, retain its residual powers to regulate rates
3 or tariffs when ruinous competition results or when a monopoly or a
4 cartel or combination in restraint of free competition exists and the
5 rates or tariffs are distorted or unable to function freely and the public
6 is adversely affected. In such cases, the Commission shall either
7 establish a floor or ceiling on the rates or tariffs.
8

9 **A BROADBAND AND DATA LIFELINE RATE FOR**
10 **QUALIFIED MARGINALIZED INTERNET END-USERS**
11 **SHALL BE SET BY THE COMMISSION.**
12

13 **LIFELINE RATE REFERS TO A SOCIALIZED PRICING**
14 **MECHANISM IN THE FORM OF APPLICABLE DISCOUNTS**
15 **BASED ON CONSUMPTION THRESHOLDS. THE LEVEL OF**
16 **CONSUMPTION AND CORRESPONDING DISCOUNT**
17 **RATES SHALL BE DETERMINED BY THE COMMISSION**
18 **AFTER DUE NOTICE AND HEARING: PROVIDED, THAT**
19 **THE COMMISSION CANNOT SET A BASE LEVEL OF**
20 **CONSUMPTION LESS THAN ONE (1) GIGABYTE PER**
21 **MONTH OR A BASE DISCOUNT LOWER THAN THIRTY**
22 **PERCENT (30%).**
23

24 **QUALIFIED MARGINALIZED INTERNET END-USERS**
25 **SHALL REFER TO THE FOLLOWING:**
26

27 **(A) QUALIFIED HOUSEHOLD-BENEFICIARIES UNDER**
28 **REPUBLIC ACT 17 11310, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS**
29 **THE PANTAWID PAMILYANG PILIPINO PROGRAM**
30 **(4PS) ACT, AS REGULARLY SUBMITTED BY THE**
31 **DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WELFARE AND**
32 **DEVELOPMENT TO THE COMMISSION, AND THE**
33 **PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY; OR**
34

35 **(B) MARGINALIZED END-USERS AS CERTIFIED BY**
36 **THE PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY**
37 **BASED ON A CRITERIA DETERMINED BY THE**

1 COMMISSION: PROVIDED, THAT THE CRITERIA
2 SHALL TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE POVERTY
3 THRESHOLD SET BY THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS
4 AUTHORITY, AND PRIORITIZE MEMBERS OF
5 INTERNET AND/OR CONNECTIVITY-DEPENDENT
6 SEGMENTS OF SOCIETY SUCH AS STUDENTS,
7 SENIOR CITIZENS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES,
8 AMONG OTHERS AND SHALL CONTAIN AN
9 EXCLUSIVE LIST OF REQUIREMENTS TO BE
10 SUBMITTED TO THE PUBLIC
11 TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY: PROVIDED,
12 FURTHER, THAT THE EXCLUSIVE LIST OF
13 REQUIREMENTS AND THE PROCEDURE FOR
14 THEIR SUBMISSION, WHICH SHALL BE SUBJECT
15 TO THE REVIEW AND SUPERVISION OF THE
16 COMMISSION, SHALL NOT BE BURDENSOME FOR
17 THE APPLICANT: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT THE
18 PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATIONS ENTITY SHALL
19 ACT ON THE APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION
20 AS QUALIFIED MARGINALIZED END-USER
21 WITHIN TWO (2) WORKING DAYS FROM
22 SUBMISSION OF COMPLETE DOCUMENTARY
23 REQUIREMENTS, AND SHALL NOT
24 UNREASONABLY WITHHOLD OR DELAY THE
25 ISSUANCE OF SUCH CERTIFICATION.
26

27 THE COMMISSION SHALL PROMULGATE
28 GUIDELINES FOR QUALIFIED MARGINALIZED END-
29 USERS WHOSE ACCOUNTS ARE NOT REGISTERED IN
30 THEIR NAME.”
31

32 **Sec. 3.** *Harmonization with the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act.*

33 – The implementation of this Act shall be harmonized with the implementation
34 of Republic Act 10929 or the Free Internet Access in Public Places Act.
35

36 **Sec. 4.** *Mandatory Submission of Report to Congress.* – The Department
37 of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) shall submit to the

1 Congress of the Philippines, through the respective Chairpersons of the Senate
2 Committee on Public Services and House Committee on Information and
3 Communication Technology, a program report detailing the implementation
4 every fiscal year. The program should include but not limited to:

5
6 a. total number of household beneficiaries including relevant information,
7 such as but not limited to, number of household members (including
8 their age, sex), and location; and
9

10 b. assessment of the impact of the program to the National Broadband
11 Plan.
12

13 **Sec. 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from
14 the effectivity of this Act, the DICT shall, in coordination with the National
15 Telecommunications Commission and the Department of Social Welfare and
16 Development, and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, promulgate the
17 rules and regulations to effectively implement the provisions of this Act:
18 Provided, That the failure of the promulgation of the IRR shall not prevent the
19 implementation of this Act upon its effectivity.
20

21 **Sec. 6. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the
22 implementation of this Act shall be included in the DICT budget in the annual
23 General Appropriations Act.
24

25 **Sec. 7. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is declared
26 invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder thereof not otherwise affected shall
27 remain in full force and effect.
28

29 **Sec. 8. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive
30 orders, letters of instructions, proclamations or administrative regulations that are
31 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or
32 modified accordingly
33

34 **Sec. 9. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following
35 its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
36

37 ***Approved,***