

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4163



Introduced by Representative **MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Philippines is facing a growing issue with misinformation, especially as social media becomes the dominant source of information. In a country where social media usage is among the highest globally, many Filipinos, particularly the youth, are vulnerable to false or misleading content. Without the necessary skills to critically evaluate media, people are left open to manipulation, which can affect both personal and societal decisions.

The Supreme Court of the Philippines has recognized the evolving challenges posed by digital media and the spread of misinformation, especially through social media. In *ABS-CBN Corporation vs. Andal Ampatuan (G.R. No. 227004, April 25, 2023)*, the Supreme Court discussed the impact of the digital age on information dissemination:

“The rise of the internet and the digital age have challenged the roles of the press. Technology has shifted the main sources of information and public discussions from traditional media to the internet, particularly in social media... The speed at which information is shared, its volatility, and the reach of false information tend to drown out the truth. Echo chambers in social media make it difficult for competing information to penetrate personal circles, failing to lead to self-assessment and reflection as to the truth of their beliefs. Thus, **an imputation, much more a lie, in social media, when spread far and wide several times, is taken as the truth.**”
(Emphasis supplied)

To address this growing problem, this bill proposes the integration of critical media literacy into the national education system. It aims to introduce media literacy education at all levels of schooling, from elementary to higher education, ensuring that students are equipped with the necessary tools to engage thoughtfully with media content. By incorporating this essential skill into the curriculum, the bill seeks to empower the next generation of Filipinos to not only navigate various forms of media but also to analyze and question the information they encounter. This will enable them to make more

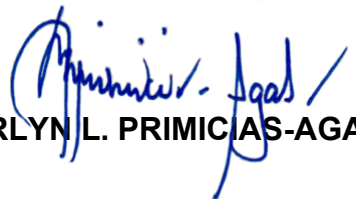
informed decisions in their personal, social, and political lives.

A key element of this bill is the creation of the National Commission for Media Literacy (NCML), which will oversee the development and implementation of a standardized curriculum on media literacy across the country. The commission's role will be to update educational materials and ensure that the curriculum stays relevant in the face of an ever-evolving media landscape, covering both traditional and digital media.

In addition, the bill places emphasis on training. It recognizes that in order for media literacy to be effectively integrated into classrooms, educators must be well-prepared to foster critical thinking among students. Through partnerships with educational and media organizations, the bill ensures that teachers will receive ongoing professional development to stay current with emerging technologies and media trends. This will equip them to guide students in engaging with media critically, identifying misinformation, and participating in public discourse with greater awareness and responsibility.

Ultimately, this bill seeks to address the pressing need for a media-literate society, one that can navigate the complexities of the digital age. By embedding critical media literacy in the education system, the bill will help create a more informed, responsible, and engaged citizenry. It will provide Filipinos with the skills necessary to evaluate the media they consume, identify false information, and contribute meaningfully to democratic processes. In doing so, this bill will help build a more resilient society, better equipped to face the challenges posed by the rapid growth of digital media.

In light of these considerations, the approval of this bill is respectfully sought.


MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS

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HOUSE BILL NO. **4163**

Introduced by Representative **MARLYN L. PRIMICIAS-AGABAS**

AN ACT
INSTITUTIONALIZING CRITICAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE
PHILIPPINE EDUCATION SYSTEM, ESTABLISHING THE NATIONAL COMMISSION
FOR MEDIA LITERACY, DEFINING ITS FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES,
APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR SUCH OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. - This Act shall be known as the "Critical Media Literacy Act of 2022".

TITLE I
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to integrate the development of critical media literacy among Filipinos at an early age (1) to develop an understanding of media, whether mainstream or alternative, and its importance in sharing opinion, and (2) to create an environment conducive for critical thinking by raising awareness on how to combat false and misleading information being circulated in different forms of media.

TITLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

- a) *Alternative Media* refers to media contents (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.) contents that fall outside the mainstream or dominant contents. Alternative media contents are progressive, critical, and pro-people. They are usually produced and distributed independently
- b) *Basic Education* encompasses kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education, as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners

and those with special needs.¹

- c) *Critical Media Literacy* is an educational response that expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies. It deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this mainstream analysis, alternative media production empowers students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives.²
- d) *Literacy* involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret, produce texts and artifacts, and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society.
- e) *Media Literacy* provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of media forms (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.)- from print to video to the Internet.

Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

Media literacy, therefore, is about helping students become competent, critical, and literate in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see or hear rather than letting the interpretation control them. To become media literate is not to memorize facts or statistics about the media, but rather to learn to raise the right questions about what you are watching, reading, or listening to.

TITLE III NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MEDIA LITERACY

SECTION 4. National Commission for Media Literacy. – A National Commission for Media Literacy (NCML) shall be established immediately after the effectiveness of this law, composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- b) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- c) Commission of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);

¹ Section 3, Republic Act No. 10533.

² Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share:

- d) A maximum of five (5) representatives from different organizations advocate critical media literacy;
- e) A maximum of three (3) representatives from different mainstream broadcasting networks; and
- f) A maximum of three (3) representatives from different alternative media networks

SECTION 5. Functions and Responsibilities of the NCMLP. - The NCML shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

1. To provide training and programs that shall help develop and enhance the skills and knowledge of instructors, teachers, and professors who teach critical media literacy and information among the students;
2. To conduct a thorough review of existing curricula about critical media literacy and information courses and to draft a standardized curriculum for all schools and universities, following the principles and guidelines set therefor;
3. To hold consultations with the public in order to further enhance its programs, curriculum, and projects for a better understanding of critical media literacy and information for all Filipinos;

TITLE IV

SCOPE OF MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

SECTION 6. Responsible Agencies. -- The following government departments, agencies, instrumentalities, and non-government organizations shall be responsible for promoting critical media information and literacy among all Filipinos:

- a) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)
- b) Department of Education
- c) Commission on Higher Education

SECTION 7. Scope. -- All Filipinos starting from grade level one shall receive critical media literacy education; the curriculum being adjusted based on child development and his/her capacity to understand.

TITLE V

PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

SECTION 8. Curriculum Development and Review. - All existing curricula that already include critical media literacy shall be reviewed and amended.

All schools, universities, and colleges that do not have a curriculum on critical media literacy and information should develop one.

In both cases of curriculum development and review, the following principles shall be adhered to:

1. Media is a **COMPETENT TOOL**. Media is a competent tool, not only in gathering information, but also as a tool for critical analysis of various social issues, (shapes opinion)
2. Media is **EVOLVING** (technology)
3. Media takes **DIFFERENT FORMS**, (alternative and mainstream)
4. Media can be **CONTROLLED** (hegemony)

SECTION 9. Curriculum Committee. -- The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in partnership with (1) non-government organizations that advocate for critical media literacy and information, (2) mainstream and alternative media outlets, and (3) nationwide alliances of student councils and publications, shall ensure that all schools in the Philippines shall have an effective curriculum on critical media literacy and information.

SECTION 10. Curriculum Implementation. « The Curriculum Committee should be able to develop, revise, or improve the curriculum on critical media literacy and information within six (6) months after the effectivity of the law.

SECTION 11. Capacity-building and Training. -- The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in partnership with DepEd and CHED, and (1) nongovernment organizations that advocate for critical media literacy and information, (2) mainstream and alternative media outlets, (3) nationwide alliances of student councils and publications, and (4) nationwide alliances of teachers or professors and their unions, shall create appropriate programs for teachers, professors, or instructors who teach critical media literacy and information at all levels.

TITLE VI MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 12. Rules and Regulations. — The Department of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 13. Appropriations. — The amounts necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the agencies. Thereafter, the amounts necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 14. Separability Clause. — If for any reason any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 15. Repealing Clause. — Any laws, decrees, or laws, decrees, or rules and regulations which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby amended or repealed.

SECTION 16. Effectivity. — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,