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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4451



INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In today's evolving information landscape, access to government information is a cornerstone of democratic participation and civic empowerment. While digital platforms have become the primary means of communication and information dissemination, it is essential to recognize that not all citizens have equal access to technology. This bill, therefore, seeks to modernize the framework for access to information by embracing both digital and non-digital channels to ensure inclusivity and accessibility.

The proposed measure emphasizes the importance of digital accessibility, enabling citizens to retrieve government data through websites, mobile applications, and electronic portals. At the same time, it mandates the availability of information through traditional means such as printed materials, community bulletin boards, and public service centers, especially in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas.

To bridge the digital divide, the bill includes provisions for digital inclusion—such as public internet access points, digital literacy programs, and partnerships with civil society organizations to reach underserved communities.

The bill also prioritizes data security and privacy, requiring government agencies to adopt robust safeguards in compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. It promotes proactive disclosure, encouraging agencies to publish information without waiting for formal requests.

With modernized language and more precise definitions, this bill aims to create a transparent, accountable, and citizen-centric government that leverages technology while ensuring that no Filipino is left behind.

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


MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO
Representative
1st District, Marikina City

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 Quezon City, Philippines

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4451

INTRODUCED BY REP. MARCELINO "MARCY" R. TEODORO

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE RIGHT TO INFORMATION BY ENSURING
TRANSPARENCY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND DIGITAL INCLUSION IN
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Title.* This Act shall be known as the "*Enhanced Freedom of Information Act of 2025.*"

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. The State recognizes the fundamental right of the people to access information on matters of public concern. To uphold this right, the State shall adopt and implement a policy of proactive transparency, ensuring the timely and accessible disclosure of government information through digital platforms and other means. The State shall also promote digital inclusion by providing support and resources to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location, can effectively exercise their right to information.

SEC. 3. Coverage. This Act shall apply to all government agencies, instrumentalities, and entities, to include the following:

- (a) The Executive Branch, including departments, bureaus, offices, and agencies;
- (b) The Legislative Branch, including both the Philippine Senate and House of Representatives;
- (c) The Judicial Branch, including all courts and judicial bodies;
- (d) Constitutional Commissions and other independent bodies;
- (e) Local government units, including provinces, cities, municipalities, and barangays;
- (f) Government-owned or -controlled corporations (GOCCs); and
- (g) State universities and colleges (SUCs).

1 **SEC. 4. *Definition of Terms.*** As used in this Act:

2
3 (a) **"Information"** shall refer to any knowledge, record, document, data, or material,
4 regardless of its physical form or format, that is created, received, or maintained by a
5 government agency in connection with its official functions or activities. This includes:

- 6
7 (i) Digital files, databases, and electronic communications;
8 (ii) Paper documents, reports, and records;
9 (iii) Audio and video recordings; and
10 (iv) Maps, charts, and diagrams.

11
12 (b) **"Government Agency"** shall refer to any entity covered by Section 3 of this Act.

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14 (c) **"Official Records"** shall refer to information produced or received by a public officer
15 or employee, or by a government agency in an official capacity or pursuant to a public
16 function or duty.

17
18 (d) **"Public Records"** shall refer to information required by law to be entered, kept, and
19 made publicly available by a government agency.

20
21 (e) **"Digital Inclusion"** shall refer to the process of ensuring that all individuals and
22 communities, regardless of their socioeconomic status or geographic location, have access
23 to and the ability to use information and communication technologies (ICTs).

24
25 (f) **"Proactive Disclosure"** shall refer to the practice of government agencies in making
26 information publicly available without the need for a specific request.

27
28 **SEC. 5. *Proactive Disclosure of Information.*** All government agencies shall proactively
29 disclose the following information through their websites and other accessible digital
30 platforms:

- 31
32 (a) A description of their mandates, functions, and organizational structure;
33 (b) A list of their officials and employees, including their contact information and
34 positions;
35 (c) Their annual budgets, financial reports, and audit findings;
36 (d) Their procurement plans, contracts, and bidding documents;
37 (e) Their policies, guidelines, and regulations;
38 (f) A list of their frontline services and the procedures for accessing them;
39 (g) A directory of their records and information holdings;
40 (h) Other information that is deemed to be of public interest.

41
42 **SEC. 6. *Access to Information Requests.*** Any citizen may submit a request for information
43 to a government agency in writing or through electronic means and must reasonably describe
44 the information sought.

45
46 Government agencies shall acknowledge receipt of the request immediately upon
47 receipt by stamping the request with the date, time, and name of the receiving officer, and
48 providing a copy to the requester. Government agencies shall respond to the request within
49 fifteen (15) working days from receipt of the request, either by providing the information
50 requested or by denying the request in accordance with Section 8 of this Act. In the event the

request is denied, the government agency shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for the denial.

SEC. 7. Fees. Government agencies may charge reasonable fees for reproducing and transmitting information. Fees shall be waived for indigent citizens and for requests that are primarily for journalistic, academic, or research purposes.

SEC. 8. Exceptions. Access to information may be denied only in the following cases:

- (a) Information that is specifically exempted from disclosure by law;
- (b) Information that would compromise national security, defense, or foreign relations;
- (c) Information that would reveal confidential sources or methods used by law enforcement agencies;
- (d) Information that would violate the privacy of individuals;
- (e) Information that contains trade secrets or confidential commercial information;
- (f) Information that is deliberative in nature and would inhibit the free exchange of ideas and opinions within the government.

SEC. 9. Digital Inclusion Measures. Government agencies shall take the following measures to promote digital inclusion and ensure that all citizens can effectively exercise their right to information:

- (a) Provide internet access and computer equipment in public libraries, community centers, and other accessible locations;
- (b) Conduct digital literacy training programs for citizens;
- (c) Develop mobile applications and other user-friendly interfaces for accessing government information;
- (d) Translate key government documents into local languages; and
- (e) Partner with civil society organizations to reach marginalized communities.

SEC. 10. Data Security and Privacy. – Government agencies shall implement appropriate measures to protect the security and privacy of government information, including:

- (a) Encryption of sensitive data;
- (b) Access controls and authentication procedures;
- (c) Regular security audits and vulnerability assessments;
- (d) Training for employees on data security and privacy best practices; and
- (e) Compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and other relevant laws and regulations.

SEC. 11. Penalties. – Any government official or employee who violates the provisions of this Act shall be subject to administrative, civil, and criminal penalties, as provided by law.

SEC. 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations. The Presidential Communications Office – Office of the President shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations of this Act within One Hundred Twenty (120) days of its enactment.

SEC. 13. Separability Clause. If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

1 **SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, and other
2 issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or
3 modified accordingly.
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5 **SEC. 15. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
6 *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.
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8 **Approved.**
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