



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4692



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
DIGITIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
AND ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish the Philippine Online Library and mandate the digitization of all textbooks necessary for the public education of elementary and secondary students to ensure access to and availability of learning materials and references.

To keep up with today's increasingly digital world, the Philippines must ensure that its citizens are adept at using information and communications technology and maximize its benefits. Other countries around the world are already integrating technology into their educational systems, recognizing its potential to bridge learning gaps, enhance educational accessibility, and foster innovative teaching methods.

In the Philippines, many public schools face shortages of printed textbooks due to delays in procurement and distribution, forcing students to share copies, go without, or use outdated editions. It also puts strains on teachers who are forced to photocopy supplementary materials at their own expense. Moreover, constructing and maintaining traditional school libraries is not feasible in remote and far-flung areas. These created regional disparities in the availability and quality of learning resources, disadvantaging rural and poor learners.

Further, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the significance of digital technology, particularly in children's lives, where it serves as a crucial tool for education, socialization, expression, and inclusion. Due to lockdowns, schools shifted to online learning, which caused many students to struggle and keep up due to a lack of access to printed materials.

Thus, digitizing educational materials and creating an online library will not only match the pace of the emerging technologies but will also address these concerns. It will enable public students to have an enhanced learning experience, ensuring they are skilled in using computers and have equal access to the increasingly digitized world. It will also guarantee that students continue learning even during disruptions to traditional schooling and that every student, regardless of location, has access to the same set of required learning resources.

To ensure the accessibility of the digitized copies, this measure also mandates the Department of Education (DepEd) to provide computers and laptops as well as the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT) to provide fast and reliable internet access to all primary and secondary public schools nationwide.

This measure has been filed since the 17th Congress. And while the House has approved it on Third Reading during the 18th Congress, the measure remained pending with the Committee on Basic Education and Culture during the 19th Congress.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4692

Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez, and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
DIGITIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION
AND ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY,
PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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 “*Philippine Online Library Act.*”

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to ensure that its citizens are computer literate and are provided access to an increasingly digitized world. Thus, the State shall provide its citizens with the opportunity to increase their adaptability with information and communications technology, and to enhance their learning experience by providing access to digitized copies of textbooks necessary for the provision of quality primary and secondary education.

Section 3. *Philippine Online Library.* – The Department of Education (DepEd) shall create a digitized copy of all textbooks and reference books it deems necessary for the public education of Philippine elementary and secondary students. This shall be compiled in the Philippine Online Library which shall be jointly managed by the Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT).

Section 4. *Provision for Access to the Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* – The DepEd shall ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks by providing computers, laptops, or appropriate wherewithal to all primary and secondary public schools nationwide. Similarly, to ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks, the DICT shall provide fast and reliable internet access to each primary and secondary public school.

Section 5. *Recycling of Computers.* – In order to offset expenses related to the procurement of computers, laptops, or appropriate wherewithal necessary for the immediate execution of the provisions of this Act, national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, and other government financial institutions which shall procure new computers shall endorse their old units to the DICT to check if the computers can still be used for the intent of this Act and afterwards shall be given to the DepEd for deployment to primary and secondary public schools nationwide.

Section 6. *Additional Online Educational Materials.* – The DepEd can tap the National Library of the Philippines (NLP) to complement the Philippine Online Library's digital repository of textbooks with additional materials that are representative of Filipino culture and literature. DepEd shall also be allowed to

add other online materials that it deems necessary for expanding the learning opportunities of students.

Section 7. *Custody over Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* – The DepEd and the NLP shall have joint custody over the digitized copies of the textbooks. The DICT shall likewise ensure the technological management of the digital repository to ensure the integrity of the system.

Section 8. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount of Five Hundred Million (Php 500,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this Act and shall be jointly managed by the DepEd and DICT. An annual budget of One Hundred Million (Php100,000,000.00) will be included in the annual budget of the DepEd to make sure that the equipment and internet connection of public schools for the purpose of this Act will be maintained.

Section 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The DepEd, the DICT, and the NLP shall have joint responsibility over the formulation of the Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary for the effective execution and enforcement of this Act. They shall do so in close coordination with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and other stakeholders. The Implementing Rules and Regulations shall be released within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act.

Section 10. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 11. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 12. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,