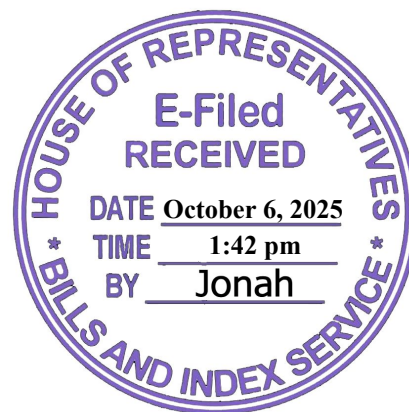


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 5167**



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Introduced by **HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE AND**  
**HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill mandates the digitization of all public records of national importance held by various government agencies to ensure their long-term preservation and accessibility to the public.

The rise of information and communications technology has demonstrated its efficiency, speed, and convenience in communication and access to information. In this age of technology, it is both wise and timely to maximize its potential through the digitization of records. Regardless of their nature, digitized records make information more accessible, reliable, and within reach of users.

The Philippine government holds records that date back decades, even centuries. However, these invaluable records are vulnerable to deterioration caused by climate change, pests, poor storage, natural disasters, and accidents. The Philippines, being highly prone to floods, fires, earthquakes, and storms, faces greater risks. Notably, in 2018 and 2021, the building housing the National Archives of the Philippines caught fire. While the collections were spared from damage on those occasions, such incidents highlight the urgent need for protective measures.

Digitizing government records is, therefore, vital to ensure their long-term preservation and to prevent the risk of permanent loss. These records are essential for future legislation, policymaking, education, research, transparency, and accountability.

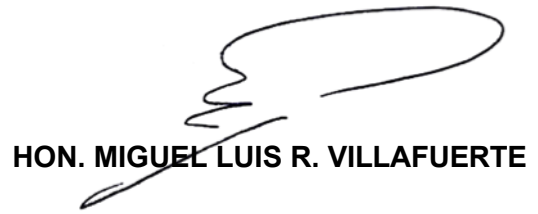
Furthermore, digitization ensures that government records remain accessible to the public, in support of their democratic rights as guaranteed under Article III, Section 7 of the 1987 Constitution:

*“The right of the people to information on matters of public concern shall be recognized. Access to official records, and to documents and papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, as well as to government research data used as basis for policy development, shall be afforded the citizen, subject to such limitations as may be provided by law.”*

This constitutional right provides sufficient basis for this measure. In light of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is humbly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'V' and 'R' that are interconnected.

**HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE**

A handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, stylized 'M' and 'L' that are interconnected.

**HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE**

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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HOUSE BILL NO. 5167

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Introduced by HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE AND  
HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

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AN ACT  
MANDATING THE DIGITIZATION OF GOVERNMENT ARCHIVES TO BE MANAGED  
BY THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY  
(DICT), APPROPRIATING 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 “*National Archives Digitization Act.*”

**SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to foster the preservation, retention, maintenance, and protection of all pertinent government documents from all branches of the government that has social, educational, and historical significance in the country. Furthermore, the State recognizes the need to modernize the management and preservation of public records to promote transparency, accountability, and efficiency through digitization.

**SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act, the following shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *Digitization* – refers to the process of converting physical archives of different government agencies into digital formats for storage, access, and preservation;
- (b) *Digital Archives* – refers to the central repository of all documents digitized for purposes of storage, access, and preservation; and
- (c) *Government Archives* – refers to all public records issued, released, and promulgated by all government agencies of the different branches of the Philippine government.

**SECTION 4. *Mandatory Digitization of Government Archives.*** – All government agencies are mandated to digitize the following documents or records, including but not limited to, in accordance with the standards set by DICT:

- (a) Official records;
- (b) Government records;
- (c) Public documents or files;

- (d) State records;
- (e) Publicly accessible records; and
- (f) Administrative and operational records.

All high-value documents such as official, government, and state records, as well as publicly accessible files, shall be digitized within five (5) years from the effectivity of this Act, while administrative and operational records shall be digitized within seven (7) years.

All new and recently issued public documents and records must have a digital counterpart within one (1) year of issuance.

**SECTION 5. *Prioritization of Archival Digitization.*** – The DICT, in consultation with the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) and the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), shall formulate a Digitization Plan to prioritize the digitization of the following:

- (a) Deteriorating or fragile government documents;
- (b) High-value documents essential for governance and transparency; and
- (c) Documents or records of government agencies or local government units located in disaster-prone and high-risk areas.

**SECTION 6. *Creation of a Centralized Database of Digital Archives.*** – The DICT, in coordination with the NAP, shall create a centralized database containing all digitized government archives, which shall be accessible to the public for transparency and accountability: *Provided*, That the DICT shall establish protocols to ensure the long-term preservation of all digitized government archives: *Provided further*, That the DICT shall establish a back-up system for disaster recovery and cybersecurity of the digitized government archives.

**SECTION 7. *Safety Measures in Digitization of Government Archives.*** – The DICT, in coordination with NAP, shall ensure that the digitization process of all government archives complies with technical and security standards.

The DICT shall likewise comply with the provisions of Republic Act No. 10175 also known as the “*Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012*” and Republic Act No. 10173 also known as the “*Data Privacy Act of 2012*,” national security laws, and other related statutes for the classified information of individuals, corporations, and stakeholders, among others.

**SECTION 8. *Personnel Training.*** – All government agencies shall train their respective personnel in digitizing their public records in conformity with the mentioned laws herein.

**SECTION 9. *Role of the Local Government Units (LGUs).*** – All local government units are mandated to digitize their public records and submit the same to DICT: *Provided*, That they shall establish their own database or portal that shall be accessible to their respective constituents.

**SECTION 10. *Penalty.*** – Any government official or employee who willfully fails to comply with the provisions of this Act without any justifiable reason shall be subject to administrative penalties, without prejudice to civil or criminal liability under existing laws.

**SECTION 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The DICT, in coordination with NAP, shall formulate the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days after its approval.

**SECTION 12. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its enactment into law and thereafter.

**SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If, for any reason, any portion or provision of this Act be declared unconstitutional, other parts or provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SECTION 14. *Repealing Clause.*** – All acts, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 15. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*