



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
1st Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 5183



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER A. LAGBAS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Filipino youth are among the most active internet users in the world. As of January 2025, there are approximately 97.5 million internet users in the country, representing 83.8 percent of the population.¹ Filipinos spend an average of eight hours and fifty-two minutes online every day, with more than five hours spent on mobile devices.² A significant portion of these users are children and adolescents, who now spend an average of two hours daily online, often on social media platforms and mobile games.³

The Philippines is also one of the largest gaming markets in Southeast Asia, with nearly 45 million active Filipino gamers.⁴ Yet, research shows that Filipino children are particularly vulnerable in cyberspace. A report revealed that Filipino children are the second most vulnerable to online threats globally.⁵ Another report noted that online games have become “hunting

¹ DataReportal, Digital 2025: The Philippines, [datareportal.com](https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-philippines), January 2025, <https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2025-philippines> (accessed September 29, 2025).

² Meltwater, Social Media Statistics in the Philippines [Updated 2025], [meltwater.com](https://www.meltwater.com/en/blog/social-media-statistics-philippines), June 18, 2025, <https://www.meltwater.com/en/blog/social-media-statistics-philippines> (accessed September 29, 2025).

³ UNICEF, *Philippines Kids Online: The Online Experiences of Children in the Philippines — Opportunities, Risks and Barriers*, UNICEF Philippines, 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2706/file/UNIPH-2021-PhilippinesKidsOnline-FullReport.pdf> (accessed September 23, 2025).

⁴ Gianne D. Inumberable, *The Rising Popularity of eSports in the Philippines*, Bria Homes, (2022) <https://www.bria.com.ph/articles/the-rising-popularity-of-esports-in-the-philippines/> (accessed September 29, 2025).

⁵ Ramon Royandoyan, *Filipino Kids Are Second Most Vulnerable to Online Threats Globally — Study*, Philstar, April 26, 2022, <https://www.philstar.com/business/2022/04/26/2176906/filipino-kids-are-second-most-vulnerable-online-threats-globally-study> (accessed September 29, 2025).

grounds” for predators, where anonymity allows grooming, sexual exploitation, and exposure to abusive behavior such as racism, homophobia, sexism, and hate speech.⁶

The risks are not limited to content exposure. The rise of online consumerism among Filipino youth has created new forms of exploitation. Many mobile and online games encourage children to make in-game purchases by linking credit cards or e-wallets.⁷ In some cases, transactions can occur without requiring security codes, allowing minors to spend real-world money without parental awareness. This occurs despite the fact that children, particularly the younger ones, often lack a full understanding of the value of money.

The World Health Organization has recognized “gaming disorder” as a behavioral health condition, emphasizing that excessive gaming can displace essential activities such as schoolwork, family interaction, and physical exercise.⁸ Filipino adolescents already exhibit signs of problematic gaming behavior correlated with depression and social withdrawal.⁹ These realities highlight the urgent need for safeguards that address not only harmful content but also the commercial and psychological risks of unregulated digital gaming.

At present, the Advertising Standards Council (ASC) serves as the self-regulatory body for the advertising industry in the Philippines. While it reviews and clears traditional and digital advertisements, the ASC is a private, non-stock, non-profit organization. It has no legal power to impose penalties, regulate foreign platforms, or ensure compliance by non-members. Similarly, the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) regulates films and television programs but does not have clear jurisdiction over digital games or online advertising. This leaves a regulatory gap that places Filipino children at risk.

This bill addresses existing gaps by **expanding the mandate of the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board (MTRCB) under Presidential Decree No. 1986** to include the regulation of digital games and related advertising. Under the proposed amendments, the MTRCB shall have the authority to classify and rate all video and mobile games distributed in the Philippines and regulate online advertisements for such games. The bill also prohibits the sale or distribution of “Adults Only” rated games to minors, requires age-rating labels and content warnings for all advertisements, and imposes penalties on violators.

⁶ Nellie Bowles & Michael H. Keller, *Video Games and Child Sex Abuse: The Hidden Dangers*, The New York Times, December 7, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/07/us/video-games-child-sex-abuse.html> (accessed September 29, 2025).

⁷ The Sydney Morning Herald, *Fortnite Maker to Pay \$776 Million After Privacy, Trickery Charges*, smh.com.au, December 20, 2022, <https://www.smh.com.au/technology/video-games/fortnite-maker-to-pay-776-million-afterprivacy-trickery-charges-20221220-p5c7np.html> (accessed September 29, 2025).

⁸ WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, INTERNATIONAL STATISTICAL CLASSIFICATION OF DISEASES AND RELATED HEALTH PROBLEMS § 6C50 (11 th ed. 2022)

⁹ Labana, R.V., Hadjisaid, J.L., Imperial, A.R., Jumawid, K.E., Lupague, M.J.M., & Malicdem, D.C., *Online Game Addiction and the Level of Depression Among Adolescents in Manila, Philippines*, Central Asian Journal of Global Health, March 31, 2020, 9(1): e369. doi:10.5195/cajgh.2020.369; PMID: 35866084; PMCID: PMC9295867, <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9295867/> (accessed September 29, 2025).

Through this measure, the Philippines will adopt a hybrid framework that combines public regulation and private cooperation. The Ad Standards Council (ASC) will remain as an industry partner for technical pre-screening of advertisements, but the **final authority will rest with the MTRCB as a government body accountable to the public.** This ensures that children are protected not only from harmful and deceptive advertising, but also from financial exploitation, addictive gaming practices, and predatory online environments.

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



HON. JENNIFER A. LAGBAS
Representative
First District, Misamis Oriental



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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 5183

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE JENNIFER A. LAGBAS**

AN ACT
REGULATING VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMING FOR THE SPECIAL PROTECTION
OF CHILDREN, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO.
1986, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS “CREATING THE MOVIE AND TELEVISION
REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOARD”

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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect children and youth from harmful, exploitative, and inappropriate content in the digital environment. The State recognizes that video games and mobile games, together with the advertising materials that promote them, exert significant influence on the values, habits, and behavior of the young. While digital games may contribute to creativity, innovation, and economic growth, they must not endanger the moral, psychological, and social well-being of children.

To this end, the State shall safeguard children and youth from both exploitation and gaming disorder by establishing preventive regulations, enforcing responsible industry practices, and supporting parental authority, all while upholding the paramount interest of the child.

SEC. 2. *Composition of the Board.* – Section 2 of Presidential Decree (PD) No. 1986 or “Creating the Movie and Television Review and Classification Board,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 2. Composition; qualifications; benefits. – The Board shall be composed of a Chairman, a Vice-Chairman and thirty-five (35) members, who shall all be appointed by the President of the Philippines. The Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, and the members of the Board, shall hold office for a term of one (1) year, unless sooner removed by the President for any cause; Provided, That they shall be eligible for re-appointment after the expiration of their term. If the Chairman, or the Vice-Chairman or any member of the Board fails to complete his term, any person appointed to fill the vacancy shall serve only for the unexpired portion of the term of the Board member whom he succeeds. No person shall be appointed to the Board, unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, not less than twenty-one (21) years of age, and of good moral character and standing in the community; Provided, That in the selection of the members of the Board due consideration shall be given to such qualifications as would produce a multi-sectoral combination of expertise in the various areas of motion picture, television, and video and online games; Provided, further, That at least five (5) members of the Board shall be members of the Philippine Bar. Provided, further, That at least fifteen (15) members of the Board may come from the movie and television industry to be nominated by legitimate associations representing the various sectors of said industry; PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT AT LEAST FIVE (5) MEMBERS OF THE BOARD SHALL COME FROM THE VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMING INDUSTRY, TO BE NOMINATED BY LEGITIMATE ASSOCIATIONS DULY REGISTERED WITH THE PROPER GOVERNMENT AGENCY AND REPRESENTING THE VARIOUS SECTORS THEREOF.

SEC. 3. Powers and Functions. – Section 3 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 3. Powers and Functions – The Board shall have the following functions, powers and duties:

a) X X X

b) To screen, review and examine all motion pictures, VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, as herein defined, television programs, including publicity materials such as advertisements, trailers and stills, whether such motion pictures and publicity materials be for theatrical or non-theatrical distribution, for television broadcast or for general viewing, imported or produced in the Philippines, and in the latter case, whether they be for local viewing or for export;

c) To approve or disapprove, delete objectionable portions from and/or prohibit the importation, exportation, production, copying, distribution, sale, lease, exhibition and/ or television broadcast of the motion pictures, VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, television programs, and publicity materials subject of the preceding paragraph, which, in the judgment of the board applying contemporary Filipino cultural values as standard, are objectionable for being immoral, indecent, contrary to law and/or good customs, injurious to the prestige of the Republic of the Philippines or its people, or with a dangerous tendency to encourage the commission of violence or of wrong or crime, such as but not limited to:

i. X X X

Provided, however, X X X

d) To supervise, regulate, and grant, deny or cancel, permits for the importation, exportation, production, copying, distribution, sale, lease, exhibition, and/or television broadcast of all motion pictures, VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, television programs, and publicity materials, to the end that no such pictures, programs and materials as are determined by the Board to be objectionable In accordance with paragraph (c) hereof shall be imported, exported, produced, copied, reproduced, distributed, sold, leased, exhibited, and/or broadcast by television;

e) To classify motion pictures, VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, television programs and similar shows into categories such as "G" or "For General Patronage" (all ages admitted), "P" or "Parental Guidance Suggested", "R" or "Restricted" (for adults only), "X" or "Not for Public Viewing", or such other categories as the Board may determine for the public interest;

PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE BOARD SHALL CLASSIFY VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING:

- i. "E" OR EVERYONE, CONTENT IS GENERALLY SUITABLE FOR ALL AGES, AND THEY ARE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE;
- ii. "E 10+ " OR EVERYONE 10+, CONTENT IS GENERALLY SUITABLE FOR AGES 10 AND UP, PARENTAL GUIDANCE IS SUGGESTED BUT THEY ARE STILL ACCESSIBLE TO EVERYONE;
- iii. "T" OR TEEN, FOR AGES THIRTEEN AND ABOVE;

- iv. "M" OR MATURE 16+, FOR AGES SIXTEEN AND ABOVE;
AND
- v. "AO" OR ADULTS ONLY, FOR AGES EIGHTEEN AND
ABOVE.

f) To close movie houses and other similar establishments engaged in the public exhibition of motion pictures and television programs, OR THE SALE AND/OR DISTRIBUTION OF VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, which violate the provisions of this Act and the rules and regulations promulgated by the Board pursuant hereto.

g) X X X

h) To deputize representatives from the government and from the various associations in the movie, and VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, whose main duties shall be to help ensure compliance with all laws relative to the importation, exportation, copying, distribution, sale, lease, exhibition, and/or television broadcast of motion pictures, television programs, advertisements, and publicity materials. For this purpose, the Board may constitute such Regulatory Council or Councils composed of representatives from the government, the movie and television industry, and video and online games as may be appropriate to implement the purposes and objectives of this Act. The Board may also call on any law enforcement agency for assistance in the implementation and enforcement of its decisions, orders or awards;

i) To cause the prosecution, on behalf of the People of the Philippines, of violators of this Act, of anti-trust, obscenity, censorship and other laws pertinent to the movie, VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES, and television industries;

j) X X X

k) X X X

SEC. 4. *Unauthorized Sale and Distribution.* – Section 7 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 7. Unauthorized showing, sale, distribution, or exhibition.

X X X

IT SHALL BE UNLAWFUL FOR INTERNET INTERMEDIARIES, INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, INTERNET CAFES AND KIOSKS, COMPUTER RENTAL SHOPS, AND OTHER PERSONS ENGAGED IN VIDEO AND ONLINE GAME DISTRIBUTION TO DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING ACTS:

- A) TO SELL OR DISTRIBUTE VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES WITH A RESTRICTIVE RATING LABEL TO CHILDREN, UNLESS THEY ARE ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR PARENT OR GUARDIAN; AND
- B) TO SELL OR DISTRIBUTE VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES WITH A PROHIBITIVE RATING LABEL TO CHILDREN.

NO CHILD SHALL BE ALLOWED TO:

- A) PURCHASE OR ACCEPT A VIDEO OR ONLINE GAME WITH A RESTRICTIVE RATING LABEL UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY A PARENT OR GUARDIAN; AND
- B) PURCHASE OR ACCEPT A VIDEO OR ONLINE GAME WITH A PROHIBITIVE RATING LABEL.

SEC. 5. *Posting of Rating Label.* – Section 8 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 8. Posting of Display of Certificate or Label.

X X X

THE PACKAGING OF ANY VIDEO AND ONLINE GAME, WHETHER LOCALLY-PRODUCED OR IMPORTED, THAT IS SOLD AND/OR DISTRIBUTED IN THE PHILIPPINES, MUST DISPLAY ITS RATING AS ASSIGNED BY THE BOARD IN AN EASILY-VIEWABLE, LEGIBLE MANNER, ON THE FRONT SIDE IN THE STYLE AND MANNER PRESCRIBED BY THE BOARD. DIGITAL COPIES OF GAMES MUST DISPLAY THE RATING LABEL ON THE MENU SCREEN.

SEC. 6. *Definition of Terms.* - Section 10 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 10. *Definition of Terms.*

- 1. Motion Picture - X X X
- 2. Television Broadcast - X X X
- 3. General Viewing - X X X

4. Non-Theatrical Distribution - X X X
 - a) X X X
 - b) X X X
5. Theatrical Distribution - X X X
6. An Adult - X X X
7. Review Session - X X X
8. *CHILD* - SHALL REFER TO A PERSON UNDER THE AGE OF EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OR THOSE OVER BUT ARE UNABLE TO FULLY TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES OR PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM ABUSE, NEGLECT, CRUELTY, EXPLOITATION OR DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF A PHYSICAL OR MENTAL DISABILITY OR CONDITION;
9. *COMPUTER RENTAL SHOPS* - SHALL REFER TO A BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENT WITH TWO (2) OR MORE COMPUTER UNITS THAT OFFERS INTERNET SERVICES, TYPING, PRINTING SERVICES, ONLINE AND OFFLINE VIDEO GAMES, OR VIDEO GAMES PLAYED OVER A LOCAL AREA NETWORK;
10. *DIGITAL COPY OF GAME* - SHALL REFER TO A VERSION OF THE GAME THAT USES TECHNOLOGY, SUCH AS ONLINE DOWNLOADING, THAT DOES NOT REQUIRE A DISC OR ANY OTHER HARD DEVICE FOR SALE AND/OR DISTRIBUTION;
11. *INTERNET* - SHALL REFER TO THE WORLDWIDE SYSTEM OF COMPUTER NETWORKS IN WHICH A USER AT ANY ONE COMPUTER CAN DIRECTLY OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM ANY OTHER COMPUTER IN THE NETWORK.
12. *INTERNET CAFÉ* - SHALL REFER TO A PLACE OF BUSINESS THAT HAS A NUMBER OF NETWORKED PERSONAL COMPUTERS WITH ACCESS TO THE INTERNET FOR BROWSING, CHATTING, EMAILING, AND RESEARCH AND AVAILABLE FOR USE BY CUSTOMERS FOR A FEE. IT MAY OR MAY NOT SERVE COFFEE, SIMILAR REFRESHMENTS, AND FOOD. ALSO INCLUDED ARE CYBER CAFES, ARCADES, AND LOUNGES;
13. *INTERNET INTERMEDIARIES* - SHALL REFER TO PERSONS OR ENTITIES THAT PROVIDE INFRASTRUCTURE, PLATFORMS, ACCESS TO, AND HOST, TRANSMIT AND INDEX CONTENT, PRODUCTS AND SERVICES ORIGINATED BY THIRD PARTIES ON THE INTERNET;
14. *INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDER* - SHALL REFER TO A PUBLIC TELECOMMUNICATION ENTITY (PTE) OR VALUE-ADDED SERVICE (VAS) PROVIDER DULY AUTHORIZED BY OR

REGISTERED WITH THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION (NTC) THAT PROVIDES USERS OR OTHER ENTITIES WITH DATA CONNECTION, ALLOWING ACCESS TO THE INTERNET THROUGH PHYSICAL TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE, AND SUCH ACCESS IS NECESSARY FOR INTERNET USERS TO ACCESS CONTENT AND SERVICES ON THE INTERNET, AND FOR CONTENT PROVIDERS TO PUBLISH OR DISTRIBUTE MATERIALS ONLINE;

15. *ONLINE GAMING* - SHALL REFER TO ANY TYPE OF SINGLE- OR MULTIPLAYER COMMERCIAL DIGITAL GAME VIA ANY INTERNET-CONNECTED DEVICE, INCLUDING DEDICATED CONSOLES, DESKTOP COMPUTERS, LAPTOPS, TABLETS AND MOBILE PHONES;
16. *PARTICIPATIVE NETWORK PLATFORM PROVIDER* - SHALL REFER TO ANY PERSON OR ENTITY, INCLUDING A SOCIAL MEDIA INTERMEDIARY, THAT FACILITATES SOCIAL COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION EXCHANGES WHICH IS BASED ON ONLINE TECHNOLOGIES SUCH AS WEB, INSTANT MESSAGING, OR MOBILE TECHNOLOGIES, THAT ENABLE USERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO DEVELOPING, RATING, COLLABORATING ON, AND DISTRIBUTING INTERNET CONTENT AND DEVELOPING AND CUSTOMIZING INTERNET APPLICATIONS OR TO CONDUCT SOCIAL NETWORKING. IT MAY ALSO REFER TO A PERSON OR AN ENTITY THAT PROVIDES A PLATFORM OR SITE FOR BLOGGING, VIDEO-SHARING, PICTURE-SHARING, FILE-SHARING SITES, ONLINE GAMING, OR INSTANT MESSAGING, AMONG OTHERS.
17. *RATING LABEL* - SHALL REFER TO A MARKER THAT USES WORDS, COLORS, AND/OR OTHER VISUAL STYLE ELEMENTS TO CLEARLY COMMUNICATE THE RATING OF THE GAME AS CLASSIFIED BY THE MOVIE AND TELEVISION REVIEW AND CLASSIFICATION BOARD (BOARD).
18. *VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES* - SHALL REFER TO A GAME PLAYED BY ELECTRONICALLY OR DIGITALLY MANIPULATING IMAGES PRODUCED BY A COMPUTER PROGRAM ON A TELEVISION SCREEN, OR OTHER ELECTRONIC DISPLAY SCREEN, INCLUDING ONLINE PLATFORMS.
19. *VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES DISTRIBUTION* - SHALL REFER TO ANY COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY THAT MAKES A VIDEO AND ONLINE GAME AVAILABLE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC,

INCLUDING MAKING A VIDEO GAME AVAILABLE FOR FREE
DOWNLOAD ONLINE.

SEC. 7. *Penalty.* - Section 11 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 11. *Penalty.* -

X X X

THE FOLLOWING PENALTIES SHALL BE IMPOSED UPON INTERNET
INTERMEDIARIES, INTERNET SERVICE PROVIDERS, INTERNET CAFÉS
AND KIOSKS, COMPUTER RENTAL SHOPS, AND ALL OTHER PERSONS
ENGAGED IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF VIDEO AND ONLINE GAMES FOR
ANY VIOLATION OF THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT:

- a) 1ST OFFENSE: FINE OF P50,000 FOR VIOLATION OF ANY OF THE
PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT;
- b) 2ND OFFENSE: FINE OF P100,000 FOR VIOLATION OF ANY OF
THE PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT;
- c) 3RD AND SUCCEEDING OFFENSE: FINE OF P150,000 AND/OR
THE REVOCATION OF BUSINESS PERMIT AND LICENSE TO
OPERATE, AND CLOSURE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT, OR BOTH,
AT THE DISCRETION OF THE COURT.

SEC. 8. *Banning of Video and Online Games.* - Section 12 of PD No. 1986 is hereby amended
to read as follows:

Section 12. *Banning of Motion Pictures, VIDEO AND ONLINE Games, and
Television Programs.*

X X X

THIS PROCEDURE SHALL ALSO APPLY TO VIDEO AND ONLINE
GAMES AND OUTDOOR MEDIA AS DEEMED BY THE BOARD TO BE
UNFIT FOR CONSUMPTION IN THE PHILIPPINES.

SEC. 9. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall
be charged against the current appropriations of the MTRCB under the Office of the President.
Thereafter, the funds necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual
General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - All implementing rules and regulations necessary to enforce this Act must be issued and shall take effect not later than sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - Any portion of or provision of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying the other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portion or provision can still subsist and be given effect in its entirety.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or any two (2) newspapers of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,