



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



**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5521

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**Introduced by Representative Nelson S. Legacion**  
**Third Congressional District, Camarines Sur**

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article XIV, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution guarantees the right to a complete, adequate, and integrated education system that is relevant to the needs of the people. While Republic Act No. 7743, known as "*An Act Providing for the Establishment of Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries and Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines, Appropriating the Necessary Funds Therefor and For Other Purposes*," addressed the establishment of physical libraries, the rise of the digital age requires a modern approach to education. This bill seeks to bridge the gap between traditional learning and a digitally-connected world by digitizing educational materials and making them universally accessible.

The Philippine Online Library (POL), which this bill aims to establish, will serve as the official digital repository for all textbooks and reference materials used in public elementary and secondary education. The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), National Library of the Philippines (NLP) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will be tasked with its creation and management, ensuring a secure and reliable platform.

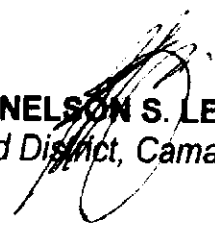
To ensure equitable access, this bill mandates that the DepEd provide computers and other devices to all public schools, while the DICT will ensure free and reliable internet access in accordance with Republic Act No. 10929, also known as the "*Free Internet Access in Public Places Act*." The measure also promotes fiscal responsibility by requiring government agencies to donate old but functional computers to help offset initial costs.

This initiative is a critical component of a comprehensive strategy to transform Philippine education for the 21st century. It complements other bills filed by this author, including a measure to establish Late-Night Learning Hubs in all cities in the country and another to create Barangay e-Libraries within the Third

Congressional District of Camarines Sur. These bills collectively aim to create a dynamic, digitally connected, and accessible learning environment for a new generation.

This proposed measure was filed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress by Representatives Yedda Marie Romualdez, Jude Acidre, Gabriel Bordado, Jr., Alfred Delos Santos, Patrick Michael Vargas and Senators Sherwin Gatchalian, Ramon Revilla, Jr., and Jinggoy Estrada. This continued legislative pursuit is part of a broader effort to modernize the country's library system and ensure that the State's constitutional mandate to provide quality education is met in the digital era.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.

  
**NELSON S. LEGACION**  
*Representative, Third District, Camarines Sur*



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**AN ACT DIGITIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION,  
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY, AND APPROPRIATING  
FUNDS THEREFOR**

***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 establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society. The State shall also ensure that its citizens are equipped with adequate literacy and are provided access to an increasingly digitized world. Thus, the State shall provide its citizens with the opportunity to increase their adaptability to information and communications technology, and to enhance their learning experience by providing access to digitized copies of textbooks and reference books necessary for the provision of quality elementary and secondary education.

**SECTION 3. *The Philippine Online Library (POL).*** - The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and National Library of the Philippines (NLP), in collaboration with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall establish and manage the Philippine Online Library (POL).

The POL shall serve as the official digital repository for all textbooks and reference materials prescribed for public elementary and secondary education. The DepEd and CHED shall be responsible for digitizing or acquiring digital versions of all necessary textbooks and reference materials, ensuring that necessary authorizations are obtained from authors or publishers in strict

accordance with existing intellectual property laws. The DICT shall be responsible for the technological management, maintenance, and security of the digital repository to ensure system integrity and uninterrupted access.

**SECTION 4. *Provision for Access to the Digitized Copies of Textbooks.*** - The DepEd shall ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks and reference books by providing computers, laptops, or other appropriate devices to all elementary and secondary public schools nationwide. Similarly, in order to ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks, the DICT shall provide free, reliable, and secure internet access to each elementary and secondary public school pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 10929 or the "*Free Internet Access in Public Places Act*".

**SECTION 5. *Reuse of Government Equipment.*** To help offset the costs of procuring new devices, all national government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, and other government financial institutions that have procured new computers shall, within ninety (90) days, endorse their old but functional units to the DICT. The DICT shall inspect, refurbish, and prepare these units for use. Subsequently, these devices shall be turned over to the DepEd for deployment to public elementary and secondary schools, prioritizing those with the greatest need.

**SECTION 6. *Additional Online Educational Materials.*** - The DepEd and CHED may integrate additional educational materials into the POL, including but not limited to, complementary materials from the NLP that are representative of Filipino culture and literature. The DepEd and CHED are also authorized to add other online resources it deems necessary to expand learning opportunities for students and teachers.

**SECTION 7. *Custody over Digitized Copies of Textbooks.*** - The NLP shall have the sole 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 Pesos (₱ 500,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this Act and shall be jointly managed by the DepEd and the DICT. An annual budget of One Hundred Million Pesos (₱ 100,000,000.00) is dedicated to ensuring the continuous maintenance of equipment and internet connection in public schools.

The ₱ 100 Million budget is to be split and included in the annual budgets of the following four agencies: DepEd, CHED, NLP and DICT.

**SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, CHED, NLP and DICT, in close coordination with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), and other stakeholders shall jointly issue the rules and regulations implementing its provisions. The implementing rules and regulations (IRR) issued pursuant to this section shall take effect thirty (30) days after its publication in a newspaper of general circulation.

**SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in force and effect.

**SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.*** - All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances or parts thereof contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

**SECTION 12. *Effectivity.*** - Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*