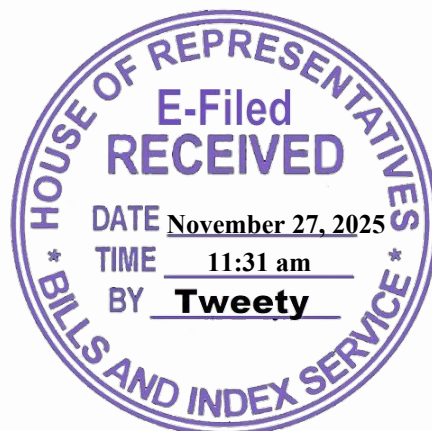


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6432



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC
DEVICES DURING CLASS HOURS FROM KINDERGARTEN TO SENIOR HIGH
SCHOOL IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In today's digital age, mobile devices and electronic gadgets have become ubiquitous, even among young learners. While these tools offer educational benefits, their unregulated use during class hours has led to growing concerns over distraction, reduced academic performance, and adverse health effects.

According to a 2022 report by the Programme for International Student Assessment or PISA, 41% of students in the Philippines get distracted using digital devices while 37% get distracted by other students who are using digital devices during their math class.¹

Furthermore, excessive gadget use has been linked to sleep disorders, poor posture, and emotional issues among students. In India, for example, students using devices for over eight hours daily reported high rates of headaches (60%) and vision problems (53%). These findings highlight the need for structured regulation, while still allowing exceptions for learning needs, health conditions, and emergencies².

Globally, seventy-nine (79) education systems have already implemented smartphone bans by the end of 2024, according to UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring (GEM) report³. Countries such as France, Spain, China, and Australia have adopted varying degrees of restrictions, often allowing exceptions for pedagogical or health-related purposes. These

¹ https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/pisa-2022-results-volume-i-and-ii-country-notes_ed6fbcc5-en/philippines_a0882a2d-en.html

² <https://www.communitynursing.net/article/view/185/6-1-27>

³ <https://www.unesco.org/en/articles/smartphones-school-only-when-they-clearly-support-learning>

policies are often accompanied by digital literacy programs to ensure responsible technology use.

Locally, the Department of Education (DepEd) has issued guidelines discouraging cellphone use in classrooms, yet enforcement remains inconsistent⁴. This bill seeks to institutionalize a clear and enforceable policy across all public and private schools from Kindergarten to Senior High School.

While we must support the use of electronic gadgets such as cellphones and tablets as alternative learning platforms, we must also ensure that learning environments remain distraction-free and conducive to holistic development.

This proposed legislation aligns with the State's duty to protect the physical, intellectual, and social well-being of Filipino learners. By limiting gadget use during class hours, we aim to foster a more focused, equitable, and health-conscious educational environment.

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



AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI

Representative, 3rd District of Bukidnon

⁴ Department Order No. 83, s. 2003; DECS Orders Nos. 70, s. 1999 and 26, s. 2000

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HOUSE BILL NO. 6432

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

AN ACT
PROHIBITING THE USE OF MOBILE DEVICES AND OTHER ELECTRONIC GADGETS DURING CLASS HOURS FROM KINDERGARTEN TO SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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

1 **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “Electronic Gadget-Free
2 Schools Act.”
3

4 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is the policy of the State to promote and protect the
5 physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of our youth and learners. Towards
6 this end, policies must be crafted to safeguard their well-being and enhance their potentials and
7 skills through eliminating distractions caused by mobile devices and other electronic gadgets
8 and protecting them from the unwarranted effects of excessive online and gaming use.
9

10 **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:
11

12 a. ***Mobile Device*** refers to any form of portable electronic devices such as but not
13 limited to smartphones, cellular phones, tablet computers, pocket personal
14 computer (PC), palmtops, smartwatches, virtual reality (VR) headsets, smart
15 glasses, wearable cameras, and other similar devices which can store, send, receive,
16 and move data through the internet or wireless connection.
17

1 b. ***Electronic Gadget*** refers to any portable electronic device that can enable its user
2 to make calls, capture photos, stream video, and play games such as but not limited
3 to laptops, video games consoles, virtual reality headsets, smart glasses, wearable
4 cameras, and other similar contraptions.

5
6 **SEC. 4. Coverage.** - This Act shall apply to all public and private education institutions
7 offering any level of the basic education curriculum.

8
9 **SEC. 5. Prohibition on the Use of Mobile Devices and Other Electronic Gadgets by**
10 ***Learners.*** - The Department of Education (DepEd) shall promulgate guidelines on the
11 prohibition of the use of mobile devices and other electronic gadgets by learners from
12 Kindergarten to Senior High School within the school premises during class hours except as
13 provided under Section 7 of this Act.

14
15 The DepEd shall likewise ensure that private education institutions formulate
16 guidelines in accordance with this Act and include the same in their respective handbooks and
17 school policies.

18
19 School premises shall include classrooms, laboratories, bathrooms, gymnasiums,
20 canteens or cafeterias, designated school club rooms, swimming pools, teachers' lounges, and
21 school offices.

22
23 **SEC. 6. Prohibition on the Use of Mobile Devices and Other Electronic Gadgets by**
24 ***Teachers and Faculty Members.*** - Teachers and faculty members are likewise prohibited from
25 using mobile devices and other electronic gadgets during their designated teaching hours in
26 classrooms, except as provided under Section 7 of this Act.

27
28 **SEC. 7. Exceptions.** - Mobile devices and other electronic gadgets shall not be used
29 within the school premises during class hours except in the following circumstances:

30
31 a. *Learning-related exceptions*, such as classroom presentations or class-based
32 learning activities, requiring the use of such technologies, or for learners for whom
33 a reasonable adjustment to a learning program is needed due to learning disability
34 or difficulty;

1 b. *Health and well-being-related exceptions*, such as learners with specific health
2 conditions that may require mobile devices and other electronic gadgets, as certified
3 by a medical doctor and duly noted by the School Head; and

4
5 c. *Exceptions related to managing risks*, such as in case of emergency, in response to
6 a perceived threat or danger, or in case of field trips and other school-related
7 activities outside the school premises.

8
9 d. Other analogous circumstances where the use of mobile devices and other electronic
10 gadgets are essential to support the learning, education, health and protection of
11 students, teachers, and other non-teaching personnel within the school premises.

12
13 **SEC. 8. *Sanctions for Non-compliance.*** - All covered public and private education
14 institutions who fail to comply with the provisions of this Act shall be subject to sanctions that
15 may be imposed by the DepEd. Learners shall likewise be subject to appropriate sanctions
16 provided in the school policies set forth by the DepEd, for violation of Section 5 hereof.

17
18 **SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** - The DepEd, in consultation with the
19 Department of Health, representatives from the Parent- Teacher Associations, relevant
20 government agencies, and other private stakeholders shall promulgate the rules and regulations
21 within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act.

22
23 **SEC. 10. *Separability Clause.*** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid
24 or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and
25 effect.

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

29
30 **SEC. 12. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
31 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

32
33 *Approved,*