

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
 First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6567



Introduced by: **REP. RACHEL MARGUERITE "CUTIE" DEL MAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In recent years, Filipino children have grown up in a world profoundly shaped by digital technology. Social media, once designed primarily for adult interaction, has steadily become a space frequented by younger users, often without proper supervision or safeguards. While these platforms offer avenues for creativity, connection, and learning, they also expose children to unprecedented risks at a stage in life when they are still developing the emotional maturity, judgment, and resilience needed to navigate such environments.

Studies here and abroad consistently show that early and unsupervised exposure to social media is strongly associated with anxiety, depression, sleep disruption, ~~poor~~ self-esteem, cyberbullying, online exploitation, and addictive digital behavior. Children who are too young to fully understand online interactions are especially vulnerable to grooming, harassment, inappropriate content, and algorithm-driven engagements that reward compulsive use. The online world, despite its benefits, can easily overwhelm a child who simply does not yet have the tools to protect themselves.¹

In the Philippines, where internet and gadget use among minors continues to rise, many parents and teachers have expressed deep concern about the growing influence of social media on children's mental health, safety, academic performance, and family relationships. For many families, the challenge is no longer whether social media is useful, but how to ensure that children's formative years are not compromised by an environment they are not yet prepared to handle.

This proposed measure, the "*Child Online Protection and Social Media Safety Act*," responds to this urgent national concern. It does not aim to punish parents, restrict healthy digital learning, or demonize technology. Rather, it seeks to establish clear, balanced, and practical safeguards that prioritize the well-being of Filipino children while acknowledging the essential role of parents in guiding their growth.

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamanetworkopen/fullarticle/2834349?utm>

The bill proposes the following key policies:

- a. Prohibiting children below fourteen (14) years old from creating, accessing, or using personal accounts on social-media platforms, recognizing that these platforms' design and content are often unsuitable for younger users.
- b. Requiring social-media companies operating in the Philippines to implement robust, privacy-compliant age-verification systems, remove underage accounts, and submit annual transparency reports, ensuring that online platforms share responsibility in protecting Filipino children.
- c. Empowering parents and guardians to request the removal or deactivation of accounts that may belong to their children, while ensuring they are not criminally penalized for violations.
- d. Supporting schools and educational institutions by clearly defining when limited, supervised, and non-interactive access may be allowed strictly for educational purposes.
- e. Mandating key government agencies such as the DICT, DepEd, CHED, DSWD, NCMF, and NCIP to promote digital literacy, develop culturally sensitive materials, and conduct nationwide awareness campaigns on healthy digital use.
- f. Strengthening community-level support, ensuring families have access to counseling, intervention programs, and guidance on safe technology use through the DSWD and LGUs.

This legislation recognizes that technology is not the enemy, but that children deserve an online ecosystem designed with their safety at its core. It asserts that government, parents, schools, and technology companies must collaborate to create a digital environment that protects the innocence of youth, fosters healthy development, and prevents online harm before it occurs.

By establishing a clear age threshold, enforcing stronger platform accountability, and expanding family and community support systems, this measure seeks to give Filipino children the space to grow, learn, and thrive free from the psychological pressures and hidden dangers of premature social-media exposure. In protecting the digital well-being of our children today, we are investing in a healthier, safer, and more resilient generation, safeguarding not only their future but the future of our nation.

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


RACHEL MARGUERITE "CUTIE" DEL MAR

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 6567

Introduced by: **REP. RACHEL MARGUERITE “CUTIE” DEL MAR**

AN ACT
PROHIBITING CHILDREN FOURTEEN (14) YEARS OF AGE AND BELOW FROM
ACCESSING OR USING SOCIAL-MEDIA PLATFORMS, PROVIDING
REGULATIONS FOR AGE VERIFICATION, DIGITAL SAFETY, AND
RESPONSIBLE TECHNOLOGY USE, 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 “**Child Online Protection and Social Media Safety Act.**”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. -It is the policy of the State to safeguard and promote the physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being of children. Recognizing the growing risks arising from early and unsupervised exposure to social media, such as anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, online exploitation, harmful content, and addictive digital behaviors, the State shall adopt measures that establish a safer online environment for the youth while upholding the primary role of parents in guiding and nurturing their children.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act:

- a. **Child** refers to any person fourteen (14) years of age and below.

b. **Social-Media Platform** refers to any online service or application that enables users to create accounts, interact with content, share information, communicate with others, or participate in community-based activities.

c. **Age Verification System** refers to a mechanism required of online platforms to authenticate the age and identity of users through secure and reliable means.

d. **Parent or Guardian** refers to the child's biological parent, adopter, or any person exercising parental authority.

e. **Educational Use** refers to school-directed or supervised online activities that require limited access to platforms traditionally considered social media.

SEC. 4. *Prohibition on Access and Use of Social Media by Children.*

Children fourteen (14) years of age and below are strictly prohibited from:

- a. Creating or registering an account on any social-media platform;
- b. Accessing, logging into, or using any existing social-media account, whether personally created or provided by another person;
- c. Posting, sharing, communicating, reacting to, or otherwise engaging with any content on social-media platforms.

Provided that limited, supervised, and non-interactive access may be permitted for legitimate school-sanctioned educational activities, subject to detailed guidelines to be issued by the Department of Education (DepEd). Such access shall be strictly for instructional purposes and shall not involve the creation of personal accounts, social interaction features, or exposure to public content.

SEC. 5. Responsibilities of Social-Media Platforms. All social-media platforms operating, accessible, or offering services within the Philippines shall adopt measures that ensure the safety of children in the digital environment. In furtherance thereof, platforms shall:

- a. **Develop, implement, and maintain strict, reliable, and privacy-compliant age-verification systems** capable of accurately confirming the age and identity of users and preventing individuals below fifteen (15) years of age from creating accounts, accessing content, or using platform features.

Such systems must meet technical standards prescribed by the DICT and adhere to data minimization and security requirements.

- b. **Promptly remove, deactivate, or restrict access to accounts** reasonably determined or verified to belong to children below the minimum age, including accounts created using falsified or borrowed credentials.
- c. **Establish user-friendly, visible, and accessible reporting mechanisms** that allow parents, guardians, schools, and concerned individuals to request the review, removal, or deactivation of accounts suspected to belong to children under the prohibited age.
- d. **Ensure full and continuous compliance** with all applicable Philippine laws on data privacy, cybercrime prevention, child protection, and online safety, including the secure handling, processing, retention, and deletion of minors' data.
- e. **Submit an annual compliance and transparency report** to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), detailing:
 - 1. The age-verification technologies implemented;
 - 2. The number of accounts denied, removed, or flagged for underage use;
 - 3. Improvements or updates to their safety systems; and
 - 4. Any violations, breaches, or incidents involving minors.

Provided, that the DICT may conduct audits, require corrective actions, or impose additional safety requirements when necessary to ensure meaningful child protection and responsible platform operation.

SEC. 6. Role of Government Agencies. To ensure the effective implementation of this Act and the protection of children in digital spaces, the following agencies shall undertake the responsibilities herein assigned:

- a. **Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).** The DICT shall serve as the lead implementing agency and shall:
 - 1. Oversee and coordinate the enforcement of this Act across all social-media platforms operating in the Philippines;
 - 2. Monitor, audit, and evaluate platform compliance with age-verification, reporting mechanisms, and child-protection requirements;

3. Develop, issue, and periodically update technical standards for secure, effective, and privacy-compliant age-verification systems;
4. Establish a system for receiving and resolving complaints related to underage accounts and platform non-compliance; and
5. Recommend administrative sanctions or service restrictions for platforms that repeatedly violate the provisions of this Act.

b. Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED). DepEd and CHED shall jointly:

1. Integrate digital literacy, online safety, responsible technology use, and critical evaluation of online content into the basic and higher education curriculum;
2. Provide guidance to schools on supervised educational use of online platforms that have features similar to social media;
3. Conduct training for teachers, parents, and school administrators on healthy digital habits, safe online behavior, and early detection of harmful online experiences; and
4. Monitor school compliance with guidelines issued pursuant to this Act.

c. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DSWD shall:

1. Develop and implement counseling, intervention, and support programs for children and families affected by excessive, harmful, or problematic digital use;
2. Provide assistance to victims of cyberbullying, online exploitation, and other forms of online harm;
3. Coordinate with local government units (LGUs) to strengthen community-based programs on digital safety and responsible technology use; and
4. Produce educational materials and conduct outreach programs promoting healthy media use within families.

d. National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF) and National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP). The NCMF and NCIP shall:

1. Assist in ensuring culturally sensitive and context-appropriate implementation of this Act in Muslim, indigenous, and geographically isolated communities;

2. Facilitate translations, community consultations, and capacity-building activities tailored to cultural norms and local conditions;
3. Coordinate with DICT, DepEd, and DSWD in designing communication materials that respect cultural and linguistic diversity; and
4. Recommend culturally aligned strategies to address online risks and protect vulnerable children in their respective communities.

SEC. 7. *Duty of Parents and Guardians.* Parents and guardians shall exercise reasonable supervision and parental authority to ensure that children under their care do not access or use social-media platforms in violation of this Act.

They shall likewise have the right to request from social-media platforms the immediate review, removal, or deactivation of accounts suspected or confirmed to belong to their children below fifteen (15) years of age.

Provided, that no criminal or civil liability shall attach to parents or guardians under this Act; however, in cases of repeated violations involving the same child, they may be required to attend digital safety, responsible technology use, or parenting support programs to be administered by the DSWD or LGUs.

SEC. 8. *Penalties.*

a. *Penalties for Social-Media Platforms.*

Any social-media platform that fails to comply with the requirements of this Act, including the implementation of effective age-verification and removal of underage accounts, shall be liable for the following:

1. **First Offense:** Fine of **₱500,000 to ₱1,000,000**;
2. **Second Offense:** Fine of **₱1,000,000 to ₱5,000,000**;
3. **Third and Subsequent Offenses:** Fine of **₱5,000,000 to ₱10,000,000**, and possible blocking, suspension, or restriction of operations within the Philippines upon the recommendation of the DICT and approval by the appropriate authority.

Each day of continuing non-compliance after receipt of a formal order from the DICT shall constitute a separate and distinct offense.

b. Penalties for Parents or Guardians.

Parents or guardians shall not incur criminal liability for violations by their child under this Act. However, upon repeated or deliberate disregard of parental responsibilities resulting in persistent violations, they may be required to attend mandatory digital safety seminars, counseling sessions, or family intervention programs facilitated by the DSWD or LGUs.

c. Penalties for Schools or Educational Institutions.

Schools, learning centers, or educational institutions that knowingly allow unsanctioned social-media access during class hours or in violation of DepEd or CHED guidelines may face:

1. Administrative sanctions,
2. Corrective measures or compliance directives, or
3. Other penalties as may be imposed under DepEd or CHED regulations.

SEC. 9. *Public Education and Information Campaign.* The DICT, in coordination with DepEd, DOH, DSWD, NCMF, NCIP, and LGUs, shall develop and implement a nationwide public education and awareness campaign on child digital safety.

The campaign shall include information on:

- a. Responsible and healthy use of technology;
- b. The risks associated with early and unsupervised social-media exposure, including cyberbullying, online exploitation, and mental health impacts;
- c. The importance of parental supervision, digital boundaries, and age-appropriate technology use; and
- d. The provisions, prohibitions, and penalties under this Act.

These campaigns shall be conducted through schools, barangays, community centers, traditional media, and digital platforms.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in coordination with DepEd, CHED, DOH, DSWD, NCMF, NCIP, the National Privacy Commission (NPC), and other relevant agencies, shall formulate and promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) necessary for the effective enforcement of this Act.

The IRR shall include:

- a. Minimum technical and security standards for age-verification systems;
- b. Procedures for monitoring platform compliance and reporting violations;
- c. Guidelines for supervised educational access;
- d. Standards for public information campaigns; and
- e. Mechanisms for inter-agency coordination and enforcement.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, orders, or regulations inconsistent with 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 in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.