

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **6931**

Introduced by Representative Julius Cesar “Jay” V. Vergara

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to regulate online mobile gambling by establishing measures for responsible online mobile gambling and provide penalties for violation thereof.

The State has a constitutional duty to promote the general welfare, protect the moral and economic stability of Filipino families, and uphold the integrity of financial and digital systems.

Under Presidential Decree No. (PD) No. 1869 issued on July 11, 1983, as amended by RA 9487, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is authorized to operate games of chance, including those operated through online and mobile platforms.

The past decade has seen the evolution of the Philippine gaming industry. The rapid growth of mobile device-based online gaming applications has changed the gambling habits of Filipinos significantly and attracted mostly users from lower- and middle-income backgrounds. The easy accessibility and convenience of playing games on the digital platform enhance its popularity, enticing minors and vulnerable persons to engage in online mobile gambling.

However, while mobile digital platforms provide ease of use and entertainment at the tip of one's fingers, these same characteristics also render online wagering a widespread and harmful threat to the well-being of its users, particularly of minors and young adults. Many are becoming addicted to the

games, which are causing destructive and long-lasting psychological, financial, and physical effects.

Uncontrolled and excessive gambling erodes the moral integrity of our nation, breaks families, exacerbates crimes, and compromises the welfare of our citizens. Worse, minors and students struggling with gambling addiction may suffer from anxiety, depression, social isolation, and in severe cases, suicidal thoughts.

Cognizant of this, concerned citizens are sounding the alarm and urging the government to enhance its regulation by establishing stronger measures for responsible online mobile gambling while acknowledging the industry's legitimacy under PAGCOR's supervision. The objective is to achieve that delicate balance between preserving economic interests and protecting public welfare. To this end, a comprehensive regulatory framework must be established to govern online mobile gambling.

This bill provides stringent regulatory measures to protect minors and vulnerable individuals from accessing the games, incorporates advanced digital identity verification and family control mechanisms, safeguards players from financial harm and addiction by prohibiting the linking of mobile or electronic wallets to gambling platforms, and protects the family assets from financial exploitation, especially in cases involving non-gambling spouses and children.

Additionally, this bill ensures transparency and accountability among online mobile gambling operators, establishes intervention programs, and promotes responsible gaming practices aligned with national and international standards.

The long-term societal costs of a generation grappling with gambling issues are immense. It undermines individual potential and contributes to societal instability.

To mitigate the adverse impact of online mobile gambling on Philippine society, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.



JULIUS CESAR "JAY" V. VERGARA

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1 **AN ACT**
2 **REGULATING ONLINE MOBILE GAMBLING, ESTABLISHING**
3 **RESPONSIBLE GAMBLING MEASURES AND PROVIDING**
4 **PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION THEREOF**

5
6 *Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines*
7 *in Congress assembled:*

8
9 SECTION 1. ***Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*Online Mobile*
10 *Gambling Regulatory Act.*”

11 SEC. 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the declared policy of the State to
12 protect the welfare of its citizens, especially the youth, from harmful
13 consequences of unregulated online mobile gambling activities, such as
14 addiction, financial exploitation, and moral degradation. The State likewise
15 recognizes its obligation to regulate all casinos, games of chance, electronic
16 games, gambling games, and similar activities authorized under existing laws. In
17 line with these policies, the State shall exercise its regulatory authority over
18 activities that may endanger public health, erode values, or compromise moral

standards, and establish stronger safeguards for online mobile gambling to protect the dignity and welfare of the people through effective regulation and legislative intervention.

SEC. 3. ***Definition of Terms.*** – As used in this Act:

(a) *Internet intermediaries* 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 which include, internet service providers, web hosting providers, domain name registrars, internet search engines and portals, E-commerce intermediaries, internet payment system providers, participative network platform providers, and social media intermediaries;

(b) *Mobile or electronic wallet* refers to a secure digital payment system operated by electronic money issuers that are used to deposit, withdraw, or transfer funds;

(c) *Online mobile gambling game* refers to any digital game accessible via mobile devices that involves wagering real money or digital financial assets with the possibility of monetary gain;

(d) *Online mobile gambling operator* refers to any individual, corporation, or other private entity duly licensed by authorities to set up and operate an online mobile gambling platform, including service providers providing indispensable services to the online mobile gambling activities; and

(e) *Online mobile gambling platform* refers to the mobile application or online channel developed to allow registered players to access online gambling remotely through the internet;

SEC. 4. ***Regulating Authority.*** – Pursuant to Presidential Decree No. 1869, as amended, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) shall exercise authority over all online mobile gambling operations in the country.

SEC. 5. ***Licensing and Registration.*** – All online mobile gambling operators, duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), are required to obtain a license to operate from PAGCOR. Online mobile gambling operators with existing license, contract, certificate or permit to operate from PAGCOR shall register anew with PAGCOR, which shall issue the corresponding license upon compliance with the rules and regulations on licensing.

For this purpose, PAGCOR shall implement stricter licensing requirements, including submission of the following:

(a) Business plan detailing game types, target market, and responsible gambling measures;

(b) Financial statements stating the paid-up capital;

(c) Proof of escrow;

(d) Responsible gambling program, tools, and protocols; and

1 (e) Platform demonstration, which contains the functional prototype or
2 screenshots of the mobile application or website.

3 PAGCOR may suspend or revoke the license of any online mobile
4 gambling operator found guilty of violating the provisions of this Act.

5 **SEC. 6. *Player Account Registration and Age-Verification.*** – Individuals
6 who intend to access any online mobile gambling platform must complete the
7 player account registration before engaging in any online mobile gambling
8 activity.

9 For this purpose, all online mobile gambling operators are mandated to
10 implement a *Know-Your-Customer* (KYC) process that involves an age-
11 verification system to ensure that individuals under the age of twenty-one (21)
12 are restricted from accessing and registering with any online mobile gambling
13 platform.

14 Player account registration on the online mobile gambling platform may
15 be completed only by submitting the following:

- 16 (a) Valid photo-bearing government-issued identification card;
17 (b) Biometric information; and
18 (c) Any other requirement relevant to proving the age and identity of
19 the player.

20 A video-based identity verification process, such as video calling, must
21 also be used to confirm the individual's identity prior to completing the player
22 account registration.

1 No user is allowed to create or maintain a player account for online mobile
2 gambling without completing the KYC procedures provided herein.

3 Internet intermediaries must block access to any online mobile gambling
4 content for unverified users and those under the age of twenty-one (21), and
5 disable integration with gambling features unless player account registration is in
6 place.

7 **SEC. 7. *Data Privacy Consent.*** – Pursuant to Republic Act (RA) No.
8 10173, or the “*Data Privacy Act of 2013*”, the online mobile gambling platform
9 shall obtain the consent of an individual before collecting personal identity
10 information for purposes of verification. The online mobile gambling platform
11 shall inform the individual submitting the information of the following details,
12 namely:

13 (a) Nature of the information that may be shared upon verification; and
14 (b) Uses of information received during verification by the requesting
15 entity: *Provided*, That the information requested shall only be used for the
16 purpose for which it was intended: *Provided, further*, That the online gambling
17 operator shall submit to PAGCOR its newly registered players on a monthly
18 basis.

19 **SEC. 8. *Prohibited Persons.*** – The following persons are prohibited from
20 accessing or engaging in any online mobile gambling games or activities:

21 (a) Persons below twenty-one (21) years of age;
22 (b) Government officials and employees;

1 (c) Members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including the
2 Army, Navy, and Air Force;

3 (d) Members of the Philippine National Police; and

4 (e) Any person prohibited from playing or participating in any form of
5 gambling under existing laws, rules and regulations.

6 SEC. 9. ***Betting or Loss Limits.*** – PAGCOR shall establish maximum
7 limits on the threshold amount in an online mobile gambling or gaming player's
8 account that may be wagered or lost by any player on a daily, weekly, and
9 monthly basis. Any player who reaches the prescribed maximum amount shall be
10 automatically suspended from accessing online gambling services. Reinstatement
11 of access shall be subject to reaffirmed user consent, mandatory reminders on
12 gambling risks, and additional identity verification procedures by the online
13 mobile gambling operator.

14 SEC. 10. ***Blocked Access to Mobile or E-Wallets.*** – Electronic money
15 issuers operating mobile or electronic wallets (E-wallets) are prohibited from
16 linking directly their digital payment systems, or electronic instruments or
17 devices to online mobile gambling platforms.

18 Any electric money issuer operating mobile or E-wallets who fail to
19 comply with this provision shall constitute a violation subject to penalties
20 provided under Section 19 of this Act.

21 SEC. 11. ***Funding of Gaming Accounts.*** – Funding or transfer of and
22 withdrawal from accounts related to online mobile gambling may be allowed only

1 through channels in partnership with licensed financial service providers,
2 including over-the-counter or online banking and credit cards, or other credit
3 facilities, and only for those account holders with healthy financial risk profiles,
4 as determined by financial institutions supervised by the *Bangko Sentral ng*
5 *Pilipinas* and subject to the anti-money laundering regulations established by the
6 Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 or R.A. No. 9160, as amended.

7 The funding of gaming accounts using cash transactions directly with the
8 online gambling operator shall be prohibited.

9 SEC. 12. ***Responsible Gambling Measures.*** – To promote responsible
10 gambling and mitigate psychological and financial harm, all online mobile
11 gambling operators shall undertake the following measures:

12 (a) *Parental Control Advertisement.* – Advertise on all media and
13 digital platforms clear information on the utilization of available parental control
14 software, applications, and tools to restrict minors from accessing online
15 gambling sites;

16 (b) *Proactive Monitoring of Player Activity.* – Establish a system
17 designed to monitor individual player activity and identify and flag behavioral
18 indicators of gambling-related harm, including patterns of gambling addiction
19 based on the funds and time spent on gambling, changes in gambling behavior,
20 and other relevant account indicators as defined by PAGCOR; and

21 (c) *Intervention and Protective Action.* – Formulate interventions
22 designed to minimize and prevent further harm, including automated,

1 personalized messages or mandatory prompts that temporarily halt gameplay at
2 defined intervals or after significant play duration or cumulative loss, and
3 temporary account suspension for players exhibiting escalating risk profiles.
4 PAGCOR shall issue and periodically update guidelines specifying types of
5 interventions, triggers, and escalation protocols.

6 SEC. 13. ***Blocking of Unlicensed Sites.*** – PAGCOR, in coordination with
7 the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the
8 National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), shall establish measures to
9 block access to all unlicensed online mobile gambling platforms, applications,
10 and websites accessible within the Philippines.

11 Upon directive from PAGCOR, all internet intermediaries, mobile
12 telecommunications providers, and analogous entities shall, within seventy-two
13 (72) hours from receipt of such order, take all necessary measures to take down,
14 block, remove, or otherwise disable access to any unlicensed online mobile
15 gambling platforms, applications, or websites.

16 Internet intermediaries, mobile telecommunication companies, and similar
17 entities shall submit to PAGCOR a report detailing the number of blocked online
18 mobile gambling accounts, platforms, applications, and websites within six (6)
19 months after the effectivity of this Act and every quarter thereafter.

20 Failure to comply with this provision shall constitute a violation subject to
21 penalties provided under Section 18 of this Act.

1 SEC. 14. ***Player Banning and Exclusion.*** – A player may be banned from
2 accessing online mobile gambling platforms upon the request of the player’s
3 immediate family members on the grounds that the player is developing a
4 gambling addiction or exhibiting signs of problematic or harmful gambling
5 behavior.

6 Upon issuance of a banning order by PAGCOR, all online mobile gambling
7 operators shall, within forty-eight (48) hours from receipt of the banning order:

- 8 (a) Disable or permanently close the player’s gaming account;
9 (b) Block player’s access to all associated platforms and services; and
10 (c) Implement protocols to prevent re-registration under the same
11 identity or linked financial accounts.

12 Online mobile gambling operators who fail to comply with the banning
13 order shall be subject to administrative penalties and regulatory sanctions under
14 PAGCOR’s licensing rules.

15 SEC. 15. ***PAGCOR Intervention Programs.*** – PAGCOR, in coordination
16 with the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Health (DOH),
17 and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall
18 implement the following programs:

- 19 (a) *National Information and Awareness Campaign.* – An annual
20 nationwide information and awareness campaign shall be undertaken through
21 print, broadcast, and digital media platforms to educate the public on the risks
22 and consequences of gambling addiction. The campaign shall prioritize outreach

1 to minors and vulnerable populations, and shall be designed to promote
2 responsible behavior, early intervention, and community engagement;

3 (b) *Curriculum Integration and Digital Literacy.* – Age-appropriate
4 digital literacy modules shall be developed and incorporated into the K–12
5 curriculum to educate learners on the nature, risks, and consequences of gambling
6 and other forms of unhealthy online behavior. These modules shall promote
7 responsible digital citizenship, critical thinking, and resilience against online
8 exploitation, and shall be regularly updated in coordination with relevant agencies
9 to ensure contextual relevance and pedagogical effectiveness; and

10 (c) *Community-Based Counseling and Support Services.* – The
11 establishment of community-level hotlines, help centers, and referral systems
12 shall be mandated to provide immediate and sustained assistance to individuals
13 and families affected by gambling addiction. These services shall be staffed and
14 facilitated by trained professionals, operate free of charge, and remain accessible
15 to all, with particular attention to vulnerable and underserved populations.

16 PAGCOR shall allocate a portion of its annual gross revenues to develop,
17 implement, and monitor the intervention programs provided under this Act.
18 PAGCOR shall submit to Congress an annual report on the status, participants,
19 and impact of the intervention programs for monitoring and evaluation.

20 SEC. 16. *Protection of Family Members in Gambling Activities.* –
21 Pursuant to Article 123 of Executive Order No. 209 or the “*Family Code of the*

Philippines,” the following measures are instituted to protect the financial interests of non-gambling family members:

(a) *Mandatory Disclosure of All Gambling Accounts.* – Any spouse who registers with an online mobile gambling platform shall be required to disclose such registration to the other spouse within seven (7) days. Failure to disclose shall constitute concealment of conjugal property use and may be grounds for legal action under Article 129 of the Family Code;

(b) *Petition to Protect Family Assets.* – The non-gambling spouse may petition the court to protect family assets, including requesting the closure of gambling-related accounts, issuance of a protective order to prevent further unauthorized transactions, or disabling of mobile or E-wallets if there is evidence of reckless or excessive gambling behavior that endangers family welfare.

(c) *Gambling Debts, Liabilities, and Losses.* – Debts, liabilities, or losses incurred in online mobile gambling shall be borne solely by the player and may not be charged against the estate, conjugal assets, or property of the spouse, children, or heirs of the player in the event of the player’s death, insolvency, or bankruptcy.

(d) *Platform Accountability.* – Licensed online mobile gambling operators shall implement safeguards to prevent unauthorized use of shared financial accounts, including:

(i) Biometric verification;

(ii) Video-based identity confirmation; and

(iii) Consent protocols aligned with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

SEC. 17. ***Prohibition of Online Gambling Advertisements in Mobile Applications for Minors.*** – All forms of advertisements, promotions, sponsorships, and other marketing materials related to online mobile gambling shall be prohibited in online platforms or applications for minors or whose audience and users are primarily and generally minors.

SEC. 18. ***Prohibited Acts.*** – The following acts are prohibited:

(a) Any online gambling operator, or any person acting on their behalf, who knowingly allows, facilitates, or encourages prohibited persons as enumerated under Section 8 of this Act, to participate in online mobile gambling activities;

(b) Any online gambling operator who receives cash in any amount or currency from its registered players to fund a gaming account that is used for betting in online mobile gambling;

(c) Any gambling operator who knowingly operates an online mobile gambling platform accessible within the Philippines without a valid and current license issued by PAGCOR, as required under Section 5 of this Act, or who operates beyond the scope of the license;

(d) Any person who knowingly aids, abets, or conspires with an online gambling operator or a minor to facilitate the minor's involvement in online mobile gambling; and

(e) Any electronic money issuer, financial institution, payment gateway, or internet intermediary that knowingly facilitates transactions or provides services to unlicensed online mobile gambling operators.

SEC. 19. **Penalties.** – The following penalties shall apply:

(a) Any online mobile gambling operator who:

(i) Violates Section 18 (a) of this Act shall pay a fine of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) for each prohibited person allowed by the gambling operators to play and suspension of operations of the online mobile gambling platform for not less than five (5) but not more than thirty (30) calendar days;

(ii) Fails to implement responsible gambling measures required under Section 12 of this Act shall pay a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more than Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) and suspension of the operation from five (5) to thirty (30) calendar days;

(iii) Fails to implement safeguards to prevent the unauthorized use of shared financial accounts in violation of Section 16(d) of this Act, shall suffer the penalty of a fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) and suspension of the operation from ten (10) to twenty (20) calendar days;

(iv) Receives cash in any amount or currency from its registered players to fund a gaming account in violation of Section 18(b) of this Act

1 shall pay a fine of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not more
2 than Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00) and suspension of
3 operations of not less than one (1) month but not more than three (3)
4 months; and

5 (v) Operates an online mobile gambling platform without a valid
6 and current license issued by PAGCOR in violation of Section 18(c) of this
7 Act shall suffer the penalty of a fine of not less than Twenty million pesos
8 (P20,000,000.00) but not more than Fifty million pesos (P50,000,000.00)
9 or suspension of license for six (6) months, or both, for the first offense; a
10 fine of not less than Fifty million and one pesos (P50,000,001.00) but not
11 more than One hundred million pesos (P100,000,000.00) or suspension of
12 license for one (1) year, or both, for the second offense; and a fine of not
13 less than One hundred million pesos (P100,000,000.00) but not more than
14 Two hundred million (P200,000,000.) and permanent revocation of license
15 for the third offense.

16 These penalties are in addition to the sanctions that may be imposed by
17 PAGCOR or the DICT against the offender or penalties in criminal prosecution
18 of the offense under existing laws.

19 (b) Any person who:

20 (i) Violates Section 17 of this Act shall suffer the penalty of a
21 fine of not less than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) but not
22 more than Two hundred thousand pesos (P200,000.00); and

(ii) Aids, abets, or conspires with an online gambling operator or a minor to facilitate the minor's involvement in online mobile gambling in violation of Section 18(d) of this Act shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than two (2) years but not more than six (6) years, or a fine of not less than Ten thousand pesos (P10,000.00) but not more than One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

(c) Any person, electronic money issuer, internet intermediary, or entity who violates Sections 6, 8, 9, 10, 13, and commits the prohibited act under Section 18(e) of this Act shall pay a fine of One hundred thousand pesos (P100,000.00) and a suspension from thirty (30) to ninety (90) days.

SEC. 20. *Liability of Government Employees and Public Officials.* – If the violation is committed by a government employee or public official, the employee or official shall, in addition to the penalties provided under this Act, be dismissed from employment and perpetually disqualified to be elected, appointed, and employed in any government office. All the retirement benefits of such an employee or official shall also be forfeited in favor of the government.

SEC. 21. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation shall, in coordination with the Secretaries of Information and Communications Technology and Justice, and the Governor of the *Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas*, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for the proper implementation of this Act.

1 SEC. 22. ***Separability Clause.*** – If any provision or part of this Act is
2 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the parts or provisions not affected shall
3 remain in full force or effect.

4 SEC. 23. ***Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders,
5 proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are
6 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended
7 accordingly.

8 SEC. 24. ***Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days
9 after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general
10 circulation.

11 Approved,