



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila



HOUSE BILL NO. 6949

Introduced by **REP. MARIO O. SALVADOR**

Explanatory Note

In this modern age, strong and reliable internet connection is forming to be a necessity as we further move towards development and modernization.

In 2003, under the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), access to the internet was recognized as being indispensable to the enjoyment of an array of fundamental rights.

Similarly, such a right was also acknowledged in 2023 during a Human Rights Meeting under the United Nations. There, it was discussed how internet access becomes crucial for human rights as it was linked to freedom of expression and development calling for universal and affordable access.

Coincidentally, our country, under its previous legislatures, has recognized the similar need for a more affordable and accessible internet connection with the goal of digital inclusiveness for both nation-building and narrowing the digital divide in our country.

According to the World Bank (2024), the digital divide has been expanding, making digital opportunities out of reach for many. Additionally, it was also pointed out that broadband internet stands out for its increasing disparity in access compared to other public and private services, utilities, and goods.



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This bill aims to enhance previous legislatures concerning Internet Connectivity by further ensuring that Network Providers deliver quality internet connection expected to them by their subscribers. Most importantly, it further protects the welfare and interest of its subscribers by ensuring that they enjoy what they exactly pay for.

Thus, approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mario O. Salvador", is written over a horizontal line.

MARIO O. SALVADOR

Representative
Second District, Nueva Ecija



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**AN ACT REQUIRING NETWORK PROVIDERS TO IMPLEMENT A
PRO-RATED BILLING SYSTEM**

Be it enacted by the Congress of the Philippines:

SECTION 1: *Short Title.* The act shall be known as the “Time Without Service Bill”.

SEC. 2: *Declaration of Policy.* The State recognizes the importance of quality internet connection in nation building, digital inclusivity, and social development. The State shall implement measures that would regulate Network Providers to ensure public welfare and interest.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* For the purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- a. Pro-rated Billing System** pertains to a billing system proportionate to the subscriber’s actual stable access to the internet per month.
- b. Network Provider** pertains to any company, corporation, agency, or individual whose business is to provide internet connection to its customers or subscribers.
- c. Down Time** pertains to the complete inability to access the internet for a prolonged period.
- d. Unstable Connection** pertains to the sudden drop of internet speed or connection for periods exceeding half an hour.



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SEC. 4. *Pro-rate Billing System.* Network Providers are instructed to implement a pro-rated billing system by deducting in their subscribers' monthly billing due to the following circumstances:

a. **Service Downtime**

Network Providers are instructed to deduct in their subscribers' monthly billing the number of days the service downtime was experienced to circumstances such as but not limited to:

- i. System error within the network provider
- ii. Negligence results in failure or delays to properly account for the payment of the subscriber
- iii. Failure to notify subscribers of possible downtime due to maintenance work
- iv. Failure to conduct service maintenance on the part of the provider such as but not limited to:
 1. Replacement of modems/routers
 2. Monitoring and maintenance of network lines/cables

Provided that the counting of the number of days would commence within 24 hours after such downtime was reported and would end at the moment the said service access was restored.

- b. *Effects of Unstable Connection.* Such deductions shall be given also to subscribers who experience unstable connection for more than three consecutive days or five separate days within a month.

Provided that such unstable connection was not due to the fault or negligence of the subscriber by failing to observe the recommended maximum connected devices as stated in their subscription contract.



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Provided that every three consecutive days or five separate days of unstable connection within a month shall be equivalent to one entire day of downtime in terms of computation.

Provided lastly that days succeeding five days are counted as a complete additional day in either circumstance.

SEC. 5. *Exemption Due Notice and Maintenance.* Downtime network access due to maintenance work shall be exempted provided that due notice is given within at least three (3) working days prior to the commencement of maintenance work.

Provided that such notice shall properly indicate the duration and time that the said maintenance work would commence.

Provided further that said downtime under such circumstances would not exceed 24 hours.

Provided finally that the said maintenance work shall properly be documented and reported to the NTC.

SEC. 6. *In Case of Fortuitous Events.* In case of fortuitous events such as natural calamities, Network Providers are expected to restore internet service within 24 hours which will run upon the moment said event subsides.

Provided further that a calamity report shall be submitted to the NTC which shall include:

- a. Areas affected



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- b. Number of subscribers experiencing downtime and unstable connection
- c. Damaged lines

Provided further that Network Providers may request an extension for restoration not exceeding five days considering the extent of the damage and with the discretion of DICT.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulation.* The Secretary for the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) through the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) shall oversee, formulate, and issue the necessary rules and regulations including the proper procedures and appropriate sanctions to effectively implement the provisions of this Act within sixty (60) days from its effectivity.

SEC. 8. *Penal Provision.* The NTC may, *motu proprio* or upon complaint of any interested party, in the appropriate administrative or quasi-judicial process, and in accordance with due process:

- a. Impose a fine for each count of violation not less than 5% but not more than 15% of the specific monthly billing of the individual complainant involved.
- b. Repeated violations may result in the suspension or revocation of the Providers' license and franchise aside from the imposition of fines as stated in the previous paragraph.

SEC. 9. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 10. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, decrees, rules, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.



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SEC. 11. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.