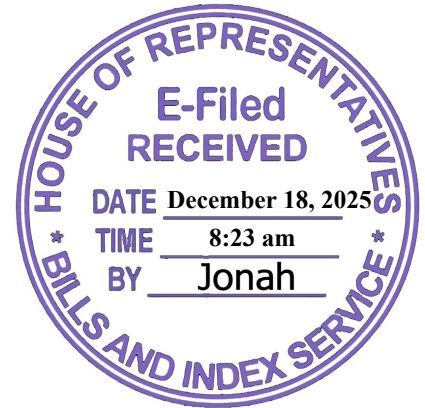


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 6972



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

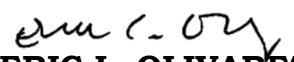
Cockfighting has historically been allowed only within licensed arenas and under strict local regulation. However, the emergence of electronic sabong or *e-sabong*—enabled by livestreaming platforms, digital payment systems, and offshore servers—has expanded gambling activity beyond the scope contemplated under existing laws such as Act No. 480, Presidential Decree No. 1602 as amended by Republic Act No. 9287, and the PAGCOR Charter.

The experience during the 18th and 19th Congress demonstrated the serious societal and enforcement challenges posed by e-sabong, including reported cases of indebtedness, family disruption, criminal incidents, and alleged disappearances. Committee hearings and public consultations consistently reflected broad stakeholder concern, including from law enforcement agencies, regulators, local governments, and civil society.

In *Byung v. PAGCOR*, the Supreme Court affirmed that gambling remains generally prohibited unless expressly authorized by law. E-sabong has no such legislative basis and its continued proliferation—particularly through anonymous digital transactions—poses risks to public morals, social order, and financial integrity. To prevent its use as a conduit for money laundering, this bill also classifies e-sabong-related acts as unlawful activities under the Anti-Money Laundering Act.

This measure therefore seeks to explicitly prohibit online wagering on live cockfighting, criminalize the operation and facilitation of e-sabong platforms, revoke prior authorizations, and empower enforcement agencies to block digital systems used to sustain the practice.

In pursuit of the State's duty to protect families, uphold public order, and ensure responsible regulatory policy, the immediate passage of this bill is respectfully urged.


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. 6972

Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

“AN ACT
PROHIBITING AND PENALIZING WAGERING OR BETTING ON LIVE
COCKFIGHTING MATCHES, EVENTS, AND ACTIVITIES, DECLARING
THE OPERATION, PROMOTION, FACILITATION AND MAINTENANCE
OF ELECTRONIC SABONG (E-SABONG) BETTING PLATFORMS
UNLAWFUL, AND DESIGNATING SUCH ACTS AS UNLAWFUL
ACTIVITIES FOR PURPOSES OF THE ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING ACT,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

Section 1. It shall be unlawful for any person to directly or indirectly commit, facilitate, enable, promote, advertise, or assist with knowledge and intent to facilitate wagering or financial gain in any of the following acts:

- (a) Engage in online, remote, off-site, or electronic wagering or betting on live cockfighting matches or activities streamed or broadcasted through any communication network, platform, or digital transmission method;
- (b) Place, transmit, receive, record, facilitate, or enable a wager or betting transaction through digital applications, websites, payment systems, social media platforms, or other electronic means;
- (c) Operate, manage, maintain, promote, develop, advertise, distribute, or provide access to an e-sabong betting platform or its components, whether hosted domestically or offshore;
- (d) Provide financial services, payment gateways, e-wallets, cryptocurrency wallets or transactions, or banking channels intended or knowingly used for or linked to e-sabong.

For purposes of this Act, *e-sabong* refers to the online, remote or off-site wagering and betting on live cockfighting matches, events, and activities streamed or broadcasted live by, through, and with the use of Information and Communication Technology from cockpit arenas or at any other place, whether licensed/authorized or unlicensed/unauthorized by the local government units having jurisdiction thereof.

e-sabong betting platform refers to the system that allows the live-streaming or broadcasting of cockfight feeds through the internet, which is then processed for wagering or betting on the outcome of each fight, match or events through the use of a remote electronic device or an off-site betting station.

The prohibited acts under this section hereof are designated as associated unlawful activities to money laundering, as defined under Republic Act No. 9160, otherwise known as the “Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001,” as amended.

The prohibited acts under this section shall be deemed separate and distinct offenses from violations under existing gambling, cybercrime, AMLA, telecommunications, or e-commerce laws.

Section 2. Any person who violates Section 1 of this Act shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than one (1) year but not more than twenty (20) years, or a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱500,000.00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (₱5,000,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court. If the offender is an operator of *e-sabong* betting platform, financier, software developer, or facilitator, or a recidivist, or the owner, lessee, or administrator of a cockpit arena whether licensed/authorized or unlicensed/unauthorized, who shall knowingly allow the conduct of *e-sabong* related activities within the premises, the maximum penalty prescribed shall be imposed including asset forfeiture under AMLA and the Revised Penal Code.

If the offender is a corporation or an association, the president, manager, managing partner, or any officer of the corporation or association who directly participated in the violation of Section 1 of this Act shall be held liable.

If the offender is a public officer, the public officer shall be dismissed from the service and perpetually disqualified from holding public office. In addition, the public officer shall also be held administratively liable under existing laws, rules, and regulations.

Any person who knowingly endorses, promotes, markets, or facilitates access to *e-sabong* operations shall likewise be liable under this section.

Section 3. All permits and licenses of *e-sabong* operators issued by the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) are declared invalid and the PAGCOR shall make an accounting of any financial obligation due to and from *e-sabong* operators. PAGCOR shall have no regulatory authority over *e-sabong* upon the effectivity of this Act. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), through its the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) and in coordination with National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), shall serve as lead agency for digital enforcement.

No government instrumentality shall issue or renew any permit, accreditation, or contractual authority for *e-sabong*.

The DICT, through the CICC, the NTC, Cybercrime Division of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), Anti-Cybercrime Group of the Philippine National Police (PNP) and other law enforcement agencies shall monitor and block all existing and emerging *e-sabong* websites.

Section 4. Within ninety (90) days, the DICT, in coordination with PAGCOR, Department of Justice, Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), NBI, and PNP, shall promulgate the IRR.

The implementing rules shall include a cyber enforcement framework, Anti-Money Laundering Act reporting protocols, and coordination procedures with digital platforms, telecommunications providers, and financial institutions.

Section 5. All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Section 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,