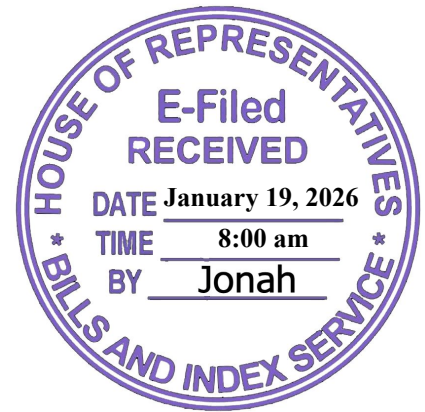




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 7135

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act No. 7743, enacted more than thirty years ago, sought “to promote the moral and intellectual well-being of the people, elevate the literacy level of every Filipino to the end that illiteracy is eradicated by the end of the century, and recognize the vital role of knowledge and information in nation-building by establishing public libraries in every congressional district, city and municipality, and reading centers in every barangay throughout the Philippines.”

However, after more than two and a half decades—and despite rapid technological progress—the Philippines continues to lag behind in promoting both literacy and digital literacy. Many of the country’s public libraries and reading centers remain outdated, poorly equipped, and unable to keep pace with the demands of modern learning. Antiquated materials and insufficient technological infrastructure have hindered efforts to provide equitable access to knowledge and lifelong learning opportunities.

The urgency of reform is underscored by the results of international assessments. The 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) ranked the Philippines last among 76th out of 81 countries. While the country slightly improved its ranking compared to 2018 PISA where we ranked last out of 79 countries, performance indicators still showed minimal gains. The Philippines scored significantly below the average scores among participating countries.¹

2022 PISA			
	Reading Literacy	Mathematics Literacy	Science Literacy
Average score of participating countries	476	472	485
PH score	347	355	372

¹ December 6, 2023. PH students still among lowest scorers in reading, math, science – Pisa. Inquirer. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1871182/ph-students-still-among-lowest-scorers-in-reading-math-science-pisa>. Accessed on January 12, 2026.

Ranking (out of 81 countries)	Sixth-lowest	Sixth-lowest	Third-lowest
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Likewise, the 2019 Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) found that Filipino Grade 4 students ranked lowest among 58 participating countries in both Mathematics and Science.²

This situation worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic when prolonged school closures further deepened learning losses. According to a joint report by UNICEF, UNESCO, and the World Bank, fewer than 10% of Filipino children aged ten can read and understand a simple text—a devastating indicator of a national learning crisis.³

These findings expose the urgent need to revitalize the country’s public library and reading center system. Libraries must evolve into inclusive, technology-enabled learning spaces that foster both traditional literacy and digital literacy. They must serve not merely as repositories of books but as community learning hubs equipped with digital resources, internet access, and programs that develop critical thinking and information literacy.

This bill seeks to modernize Republic Act No. 7743 by integrating Information and Communications Technology (ICT) into the establishment, operation, and maintenance of public libraries and reading centers across the country. It also aims to strengthen institutional support, ensure adequate funding, and promote the development of e-libraries and digital learning platforms accessible to all.

In doing so, this measure reaffirms the State’s commitment to intellectual empowerment, equal access to information, and inclusive education — all cornerstones of national progress and democratic development.

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


EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

² December 9, 2020. PH ranks last among 58 countries in Grade 4 math, science: study. ABS-CBN News. Available at <https://www.abs-cbn.com/news/12/09/20/ph-ranks-last-among-58-countries-in-grade-4-math-science-study>. Accessed on January 12, 2026.

³ April 8, 2022. When 10-year-olds can’t read: The dulling of PH education. Inquirer. Available at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1580203/when-10-year-olds-cant-read-the-dulling-of-ph-education>. Accessed on January 12, 2026.



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HOUSE BILL NO. 7135

Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO "BRO. EDDIE" C. VILLANUEVA

AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7743, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL, CITY, AND
MUNICIPAL LIBRARIES AND BARANGAY READING CENTERS THROUGHOUT
THE PHILIPPINES" AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 7743, otherwise known as "An Act
2 Providing for the Establishment of Congressional, City, and Municipal Libraries and
3 Barangay Reading Centers Throughout the Philippines," is hereby amended to read
4 as follows:
5

6 "Sec. 2. Establishment of Public Libraries and Reading Centers. - The National
7 Library in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local
8 Government (**DILG**) **AND ASSISTED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF**
9 **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT),**
10 **DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DEPED), AND THE COMMISSION ON**
11 **HIGHER EDUCATION (CHED)** shall undertake the establishment of additional
12 public libraries to serve all congressional districts, cities and municipalities in
13 the Philippines and reading centers in every barangay except in cities or
14 municipalities where there are existing public libraries or in barangays where
15 there are already existing public libraries or reading centers: Provided, That the
16 establishment of such libraries and reading centers shall be based on the
17 development program of the National Library, in coordination with the
18 development council of each city or municipality and in the case of the barangay
19 reading centers, in coordination with the respective barangay councils;
20 **PROVIDED, FURTHER, THAT THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF THE**
21 **NATIONAL LIBRARY SHALL BE BASED ON THE LATEST COMPUTER**
22 **ELECTRONIC LIBRARY TECHNOLOGIES:** Provided, further, That where
23 these public libraries and reading centers already exist, the National Library
24 shall continue to upgrade the facilities thereof **WITH COMPLETE STANDARD**
25 **SETS OF BOOKS, E-BOOKS, RESEARCH RESOURCES AND MATERIALS,**

1 AS WELL AS THE LATEST ELECTRONIC LIBRARY SYSTEM USING
2 COMPUTERS FOR STORING, CATALOGING, AND FILING OF DATA AND
3 MATERIALS: PROVIDED, FINALLY, THAT BY 2028, ALL THE CITIES AND
4 MUNICIPALITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES SHALL HAVE BEEN PROVIDED
5 WITH ELECTRONICALLY-OPERATED LIBRARY SYSTEMS.
6

7 The National Library shall continue to coordinate and organize seminars,
8 workshops and other trainings for the professional benefit of librarians."
9

10 **SEC. 2. Role of the Department of Information and Communications**
11 **Technology (DICT).** - The DICT shall assist the National Library and the DILG in the
12 provision of cutting-edge computer and electronic library technologies, as well as fast
13 and reliable internet connections.
14

15 **SEC. 3. Role of Education Agencies.** - The DepEd and the CHED shall assist
16 the National Library and the DILG in the selection of standard print and non-print library
17 materials.
18

19 **SEC. 4. Appropriations.** - The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of
20 this Act shall be included in the General Appropriations Act of the year following its
21 enactment into law, and every year thereafter, to ensure all cities and municipalities in
22 the Philippines are provided and have access to full electronic library facilities and the
23 latest library technologies and content and the same are upgraded periodically.
24

25 **SEC. 5. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within sixty (60) days from
26 the implementation of this Act, the National Library, in coordination with the DILG,
27 DICT, DepEd, CHED and other relevant government agencies and stakeholders, shall
28 promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act
29

30 **SEC. 6. Separability Clause.** – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared
31 unconstitutional, the remainder hereof or any provisions not affected thereby shall
32 remain in force and effect.
33

34 **SEC. 7. Repealing Clause.** – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,
35 executive order, letter of instruction, rule, or regulation inconsistent with the provisions
36 of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

37 **SEC. 8. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete
38 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
39

40 *Approved,*