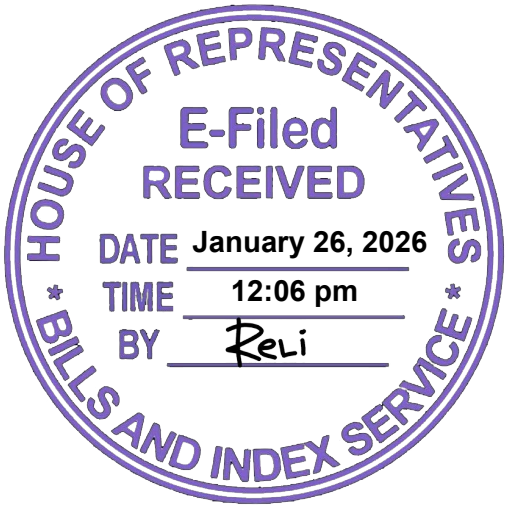
Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 7300

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVES LANI MERCADO-REVILLA, BRYAN B. REVILLA AND RAMON JOLO REVILLA III

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A FRAMEWORK FOR THE RESPONSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT USE OF ALGORITHMIC AND DESIGN SYSTEMS BY SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS, ENSURING USER RIGHTS AND SAFETY, CREATING THE SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTABILITY COUNCIL (SMAC) ATTACHED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (DICT), AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In almost every Filipino home today, social media is an essential part of daily life. Both parents and children use it to learn, communicate, and explore, and families use it to stay connected with relatives here and abroad. In fact, even grandparents maintain a social media account. With more than 98 million internet users and over 96 million active social media accounts in the country, digital platforms have become a shared space where values, relationships, and well-being are shaped increasingly.

While social media creates opportunities for expression, learning, and community-building, it also exposes families to risks connected with algorithmic systems and design features that influence what users see and how they behave online. Engagement-driven algorithms may boost extreme content, reinforce biases, or encourage unhealthy comparisons. Certain posts, especially those related to appearance, lifestyle, and health, have been shown to affect mental well-being, particularly among the youth. These risks grow when platforms use design practices that maximize screen time rather than the welfare of its users.

These realities show the need for a national framework that ensures transparency, responsibility, and user protection. The goal is not to police opinions, but to clarify

how automated systems shape the digital environment in which Filipino families interact.

This bill establishes the Social Media Accountability Council (SMAC) under the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to set standards, review platform practices, and ensure responsible design. Under this proposed measure, social media platforms shall:

- Provide clear explanations of how algorithms influence user experience;
- Allow users to control how their personal data affects recommendations;
- Report risks and harmful patterns that arise from design choices;
- Adopt reasonable safety measures against harmful digital practices; and
- Ensure accountability while respecting free expression and safeguard innovation.

Inspired in part by the Social Media Accountability Act, a model legislation developed by the Strategic Training Initiative for the Prevention of Eating Disorders (STRIPED), this bill recognizes that algorithmic systems can have real impacts on digital behavior, mental health, and community dynamics.

Platforms have begun adopting measures to address algorithmic risks, alongside misinformation and deceptive AI-generated content. However, these efforts remain inconsistent. A national policy is necessaryto protect families, uphold digital well-being, and promote transparency in an increasingly algorithm-driven society.

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

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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 "Social Media Accountability Act."

SEC 2. ***Declaration of Policy.*** **–** It is the policy of the State to promote a safe, transparent, and trustworthy digital environment. The State recognizes the value of social media in fostering communication, creativity, and community-building, but also acknowledges that certain platform practices and automated systems may expose users, especially minors and vulnerable groups, to risks.

Towards this end, the State shall ensure that social media platforms operate responsibly through efficient and reasonable mechanisms that preserve innovation, while upholding user empowerment, digital safety, and public trust.

Consistent with the constitutional guarantee of free speech and expression, nothing in this Act shall authorize the regulation, review, or censorship of the content of user speech.

SEC 3. *Definitions.* – For purposes of this Act:

a) *Algorithm* refers to any computational or procedural method used to rank, recommend, personalize, or moderate content or interactions. Algorithm excludes what users themselves choose or make, such as their own content creation.

b) *Automated Decision System* refers to any system, including artificial intelligence, machine learning, or rule-based engines, used to make or influence outcomes experienced by users.

c) *Covered Platform* refers to any social media platform or interactive digital channels that facilitate the creation and sharing of ideas, thoughts, and information ranging from text, photos, videos, and more, through virtual networks and communities.

d) *Design Practice* refers to any intentional or inherent feature, interface element, or system architecture used by a social media platform that shapes user behavior, attention, or interaction.

e) *Foreseeable Harm* refers to risks reasonably predictable from platform design or algorithmic systems, including risks to privacy, security, mental health, digital manipulation, and exposure to harmful automated patterns. This does not include assessing the truth or value of user-generated content.

g) *User* refers to any natural person who accesses or uses a covered platform.

SEC 4. *Creation of the Social Media Accountability Council (SMAC).* – A Social Media Accountability Council (SMAC) is hereby established to lead the policy, planning, coordination, and regulatory functions necessary to implement this Act. For administrative support, the Council shall be attached to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

a) *Composition.* - The Council shall be composed of the following, or their duly authorized representatives with a rank not lower than assistant secretary:

1) Secretary of the DICT, who shall serve as the Chairperson;
2) Commissioner of the National Privacy Commission (NPC), who shall serve as the Vice-Chairperson;
3) Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), for consumer protection and fair trade;
4) Secretary of the Department of Health (DOH), with focus on mental health and digital well-being;
5) Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, with focus on emerging technology assessment;
6) Secretary of the Department of Justice (DOJ), for legal and cybercrime enforcement;

7) Director of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), for digital forensics and cybercrime investigation;

8) Executive Director of the Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), with focus on child protection and welfare; and

9) A representative from the academe or civil society specializing in data science, artificial intelligence, or algorithm auditing, appointed by the Chairperson upon consultation with recognized professional or academic organizations.

b) *Duties and Responsibilities.* – The SMAC shall exercise the following powers and functions:

1) Register and maintain a list of covered platforms;

2) Receive, assess, and publish transparency reports;

3) Investigate violations and impose administrative sanctions;

4) Issue rules, standards, and benchmarks for safe platform design;

5) Partner with government agencies, civil society, and academic institutions to promote digital safety and literacy.

c) *Secretariat and Technical Staff.* – The DICT shall establish a dedicated Secretariat to provide technical, legal, and administrative support to the Council. This Secretariat shall draw upon the existing technical and legal staff of the member agencies as much as possible to fulfill its mandate.

SEC 5. *Transparency and Reporting Requirements.* – Covered platforms shall submit to the SMAC annual transparency reports describing:

a) All design practices and engagement-based features that significantly affect user behavior;

b) A description of the platform's algorithmic systems, including content-ranking and recommendation mechanisms, and how these systems are designed to avoid discriminatory outcomes;

c) Known or foreseeable risks of harm identified through internal research, and the mitigation measures undertaken;

d) Complaint-handling procedures and aggregated data on harm-related complaints; and

e) The platform's content-moderation processes, including automated and human review, and data on major design changes that significantly alter user interaction patterns;

The SMAC shall evaluate the reports submitted by covered platforms. It may require clarification, additional documentation, or corrective actions. In case of non-compliance, inconsistencies, or indications of elevated harm, the SMAC may conduct a targeted technical review or order additional disclosures.

Pursuant to the principle of proportionality, this Act shall not be construed to require the disclosure of source code or other information that is not essential to the determination of foreseeable harm or compliance with platform duties.

Reports submitted under this Section shall be made public. The SMAC shall only consider a covered platform's request for redaction of specific marked portions upon a clear and convincing demonstration that such disclosure would cause material and irreparable competitive harm, and that such information is not essential for the public evaluation of foreseeable harm or accountability.

SEC 6. ***Operational Duties and Safety Obligations.*** **–** Covered platforms shall fulfill the following operational requirements:

a) Take reasonable steps to avoid or mitigate foreseeable harms resulting from design or algorithmic systems, and establish effective internal risk management systems to continuously assess and minimize these harms;

b) Provide users with rational and accessible explanation of how content is ranked or recommended, and how automated decision systems influence user outcomes;

c) Offer users clear choices to modify or opt out of algorithmic personalization for their content feeds, and provide alternative ranking options not based on profiling;

d) Protect users from targeted harmful design practices, including manipulative interface patterns, that exploit psychological vulnerabilities or impair user autonomy;

e) Ensure that automated decision systems do not result in discriminatory outcomes based on protected characteristics; and

f) Comply with the directives of this Act, the implementing rules and regulations of this Act, and all orders and instructions issued by the SMAC.

SEC 7. ***Enforcement of Penalties.*** **–** The SMAO shall impose administrative penalties for violations of this Act, including:

a) Fines not exceeding P10,000,000 per violation, subject to proportionality based on platform size and severity of harm;

b) Orders to modify, suspend, or disable harmful design features;

c) Temporary blocking or throttling of platform features for non-compliance

Fines collected under this Act shall be used exclusively to fund SMAC operations and national digital-safety programs.

SEC 8. ***Relationship to Other Remedies.*** **–** Nothing in this Act shall preclude any civil, administrative, or criminal action under existing laws.

SEC 9. ***Appropriations.*** **–** The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DICT. Thereafter, such sums shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC 10. ***Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** **–** The SMAC shall convene within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act. Within ninety (90) days from convening, the SMAC shall promulgate the necessary implementing rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SEC 11. ***Separability Clause.*** **–** If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision or part not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC 12. ***Repealing Clause.*** **–** Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC 13. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,