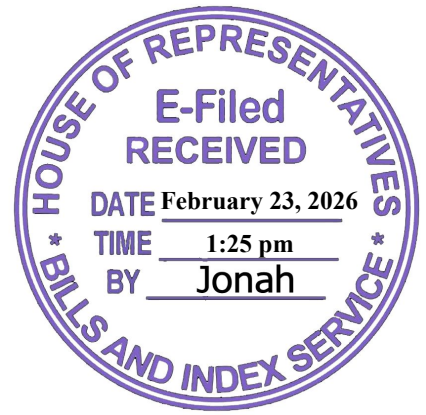




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7937



Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON “COCO” M. YAP

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Access to reliable and affordable internet connectivity has become an essential requirement for participation in modern society. Communication increasingly depend on digital platforms, making internet access a fundamental tool for national development and inclusive growth. However, many Filipinos, particularly those living in rural, geographically isolated, and economically disadvantaged communities, continue to face limited connectivity, high service costs, and inconsistent network quality.

Despite the steady growth of the country’s telecommunications sector, disparities in broadband access remain evident. Infrastructure deployment challenges, high capital costs, and uneven market competition have contributed to persistent gaps in service availability and affordability. These barriers prevent millions of citizens from fully benefiting from digital opportunities and hinder the country’s efforts to strengthen its digital economy.

This proposed measure seeks to promote universal, affordable, and reliable internet connectivity by encouraging the expansion of broadband infrastructure, supporting fair competition among service providers, and strengthening government programs that improve public access to internet services. The bill also emphasizes infrastructure sharing, improved service quality standards, and targeted initiatives for underserved communities to ensure that connectivity reaches areas where private investment alone may be insufficient.

Furthermore, the measure recognizes the importance of digital inclusion by supporting programs that enhance digital literacy and enable Filipinos to safely and effectively participate in the online environment. By fostering collaboration among national government agencies, local government units, and private stakeholders, the State aims to accelerate the development of a more accessible and resilient digital ecosystem.

Ensuring accessible internet connectivity is no longer a matter of convenience but a necessity for equitable progress and national competitiveness. Through this measure, the

government affirms its commitment to bridging the digital divide and empowering every Filipino with meaningful access to the digital world.

In view of the foregoing, **ug sa ngalan sa SERBISYONG TINUORAY**, the undersigned respectfully requests the immediate passage of this measure.


CHRISTOPHERSON "COCO" M. YAP
Representative, Second District of Southern Leyte



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HOUSE BILL NO. **7937**

Introduced by:

HON. CHRISTOPHERSON “COCO” M. YAP

AN ACT
PROMOTING UNIVERSAL, AFFORDABLE, AND RELIABLE INTERNET
CONNECTIVITY THROUGH EXPANDED DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE, FAIR
MARKET COMPETITION, AND PUBLIC ACCESS PROGRAMS, AND PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "Universal Internet Access and Affordability Act."

Section 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to ensure that access to fast, reliable, and reasonably priced internet service is available to all Filipinos as an essential component of economic participation, education, governance, and social development.

The State shall promote inclusive digital connectivity by encouraging infrastructure expansion, fostering competition among service providers, and supporting underserved and geographically isolated communities.

Section 3. *Objectives.* – This Act aims to:

- (a) Reduce the cost of internet services nationwide;
- (b) Expand broadband coverage in rural and underserved areas;
- (c) Improve service quality standards for consumers;
- (d) Promote innovation and competition within the telecommunications sector; and
- (e) Strengthen public access to digital services and online government platforms.

Section 4. *National Broadband Expansion Program* – The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with relevant agencies and local government units, shall implement a nationwide program to accelerate the construction and modernization of broadband infrastructure, including fiber, wireless, and satellite technologies.

Priority shall be given to municipalities and barangays with limited or no reliable connectivity.

Section 5. *Open Access and Infrastructure Sharing*. – Telecommunications entities shall be encouraged, subject to existing laws and regulations, to adopt infrastructure-sharing arrangements to minimize duplication of facilities, reduce deployment costs, and hasten service rollout.

The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) shall issue guidelines promoting fair and non-discriminatory access.

Section 6. *Affordable Internet Programs*. – The government shall develop mechanisms to support affordable internet access, which may include:

- (a) Public Wi-Fi expansion in schools, transport hubs, health facilities, and government centers;
- (b) Subsidized connectivity programs for students and low-income households; and
- (c) Incentives for service providers offering reduced-cost plans in underserved areas.

Section 7. *Service Quality Standards*. – The NTC shall establish and periodically review minimum performance standards covering internet speed, reliability, transparency in pricing, and consumer protection measures.

Providers failing to meet standards may be subject to administrative sanctions.

Section 8. *Digital Inclusion Initiatives*. – Relevant agencies shall promote digital literacy programs to ensure that citizens are capable of safely and effectively utilizing internet services for education, commerce, and access to government services.

Section 9. *Inter-Agency Coordination*. – The DICT shall serve as lead implementing agency and shall coordinate with the NTC, Department of Education, Department of Trade and Industry, and local government units for effective implementation.

Section 10. *Appropriations*. – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act and may be supplemented by grants, partnerships, or other lawful funding sources.

Section 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations*. – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in consultation with concerned agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations.

Section 12. *Separability Clause*. – If, for any reason, any part or provision of this Act shall be declared as unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 13. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders and rules and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

Section 14. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,