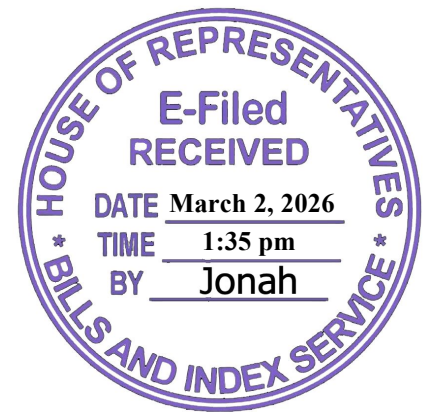


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
First Regular Session )



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
**H. No. 8193**

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Introduced by **Representative Binky April M. Tupas**

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**AN ACT**  
**REGULATING SOCIAL MEDIA USE OF MINORS, REQUIRING**  
**SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO PREVENT MINORS FROM**  
**HOLDING ACCOUNTS ON AGE-RESTRICTED PLATFORMS,**  
**PRESCRIBING PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE, AND FOR**  
**OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Social media has become deeply embedded in the everyday lives of Filipino children and adolescents. While these platforms offer opportunities for communication, creativity, and learning, they also expose minors to significant risks during a critical stage of their cognitive, emotional, and psychological development. Social media plays an important role in communication, learning, and community building; however, a growing body of evidence shows that unrestricted and unregulated exposure during early adolescence heightens vulnerabilities to mental health challenges, safety risks, and harmful online behaviors.

Filipino minors face a growing set of risks in the online environment, driven largely by their extremely high social media usage. According to UNICEF Philippines, children aged 9 to 17<sup>1</sup> are among the heaviest social media users globally, spending more than four hours per day online. A 2023 UNICEF<sup>2</sup> brief highlights that these minors are frequently exposed to violent material, misogynistic content, and posts that promote self-harm, eating disorders, or other harmful behaviors, patterns that mirror international findings but are especially concerning in a country with such concentrated youth engagement online.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2706/file/UNIPH-2021-PhilippinesKidsOnline-FullReport.pdf#:~:text=They%20spend%20more%20time%20online%20because%20this,Survey%20\(PKOLS\)%20is%20both%20a%20quantitative%20and](https://www.unicef.org/philippines/media/2706/file/UNIPH-2021-PhilippinesKidsOnline-FullReport.pdf#:~:text=They%20spend%20more%20time%20online%20because%20this,Survey%20(PKOLS)%20is%20both%20a%20quantitative%20and)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/innocenti/documents/childrens-exposure-hate-messages-and-violent-images-online>

Compounding this are alarming reports from UNICEF and SaferKidsPH<sup>3</sup> that in 2021 alone, around 2 million children in the Philippines were subjected to online sexual abuse and exploitation, including grooming and coercion for sexual acts, often in exchange for money or gifts. Many of these cases begin through mainstream social media platforms, underscoring how easily predators can contact and groom minors in unregulated digital spaces.

The rapid spread of misinformation and AI-generated content further endangers Filipino minors. The Department of Information and Communications Technology has repeatedly warned that deepfakes<sup>4</sup> and manipulated videos circulate widely online, deceiving children who lack the media literacy skills to discern credible information. Teachers also report that excessive use of TikTok, Facebook Reels, and similar platforms contributes to reduced attention, lower comprehension, and difficulty distinguishing real from fabricated content, compromising both learning and civic awareness.

Existing laws, including the Cybercrime Prevention Act (RA 10175), the Anti-Bullying Act (RA 10627), and the Anti-OSAEC and Anti-CSAEM Act (RA 11930), focus on punishing crimes or abusive behavior after these harms occur. However, they do not regulate the conditions that allow minors to enter high-risk digital environments in the first place, nor do they impose a duty on platforms to proactively restrict underage access or redesign harmful features. There is currently no Philippine law requiring platforms to verify age, limit algorithmic exposure for minors, or implement safety-by-design standards tailored for children.

This proposed measure seeks to address that gap by establishing a minimum age for creating or maintaining accounts on age-restricted social media platforms. It places responsibility on platform providers to implement reasonable, privacy-protective age assurance systems and prevent users under eighteen (18) years old from holding accounts. It also introduces strong privacy safeguards to ensure that any data collected for age verification is used solely for that purpose and is immediately deleted thereafter.

This measure empowers Filipino children by establishing clear safety standards and holding platforms accountable. It also affirms the

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/online-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-children-philippines>

<sup>4</sup> [https://pco.gov.ph/news\\_releases/cybercrime-deep-fakes-are-worldwide-scourge-that-must-be-addressed-dict-chief](https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/cybercrime-deep-fakes-are-worldwide-scourge-that-must-be-addressed-dict-chief)

need for proactive, structural interventions in the digital age, and not merely reactive measures after harm has already occurred.

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

  
BINKY APRIL M. TUPAS

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**REGULATING SOCIAL MEDIA USE OF MINORS, REQUIRING SOCIAL**  
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**ACCOUNTS ON AGE-RESTRICTED PLATFORMS, PRESCRIBING**  
**PENALTIES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

*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 Regulation for Minors Act of 2026.**”

**SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the welfare, safety, and development of Filipino minors in digital environments. The State recognizes the increasing exposure of children to online harms, such as cyberbullying, exploitation, addictive platform features, harmful content, and misinformation, and acknowledges the responsibility of social media platforms to create safe spaces for young users.

To this end, the State shall implement a national framework that restricts underage access to age-restricted social media platforms, promotes safe and age-appropriate digital participation, and holds platform providers accountable for ensuring child online safety.

**SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- a. **Minor** – refers to any person below eighteen (18) years of age, consistent with existing Philippine laws, including but not limited to the Civil Code of the Philippines, Republic Act No. 7610 (Special Protection of Children Against Abuse, Exploitation and Discrimination Act), and Republic Act No. 9344 (Juvenile Justice and Welfare Act of 2006).
- b. **Age-restricted social media platform** – refers to any online service, application, or digital platform that enables social interaction, content sharing, or user-generated content, and on which no minor below eighteen (18) years of age shall be allowed to create, maintain, or hold an account pursuant to this Act.

- c. **Age verification measures** – refer to verifiable, privacy-protective, and technically sound methods implemented by a platform provider to prevent minors from creating or maintaining accounts, including but not limited to age verification technologies, age assurance systems, and age estimation tools that comply with privacy protection standards.
- d. **Platform provider** – refers to any entity that operates, manages, or offers an age-restricted social media platform within the Philippines.

**SEC. 4. Prohibitions for Minors to Access Age-Restricted Social Media Platform.** – No minor under eighteen (18) years of age shall be permitted to create, maintain, or hold an account on an age-restricted social media platform. Parental consent, authorization, or waiver shall now override this prohibition. Minors shall not be prevented from accessing content in a logged-out state, consistent with international best practices.

**SEC. 5. Obligation of Social Media Platforms.** – Platform providers shall implement age verification measures to:

1. Assess and verify the age of users or prospective users;
2. Prevent minors from creating new accounts;
3. Suspend, restrict, or deactivate accounts determined to be held by minors;
4. Prevent re-registration or circumvention by minors whose accounts are removed; and
5. Provide safe, privacy-preserving age-assurance methods other than government-issued identification in the verification process.

**SEC. 6. Privacy and Data Protection.** – All collection, processing, storage, or disposal of personal data undertaken for purposes of age assurance under this Act shall strictly comply with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and its implementing rules and regulation.

**SEC. 7. Penalties.** – To ensure full compliance with this Act:

**A. Civil Penalties**

1. For serious or repeated violations by under Section 5 by platform providers, a fine **ranging from One Hundred Million Pesos (₱100,000,000.00) to Two Hundred Million Pesos (₱200,000,000.00)** shall be imposed, as determined by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), taking into account the gravity, duration, frequency, and scale of the violation.
2. For violations involving improper collection, storage, processing, or use of personal data in the implementation of age verification measures under Section 6, a fine **ranging from Twenty Million Pesos ₱20,000,000.00 to Fifty Million Pesos (₱50,000,000.00)** shall be imposed, without prejudice to penalties under the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

## **B. Administrative Penalties**

The DICT, in coordination with the National Privacy Commission (NPC), may impose:

1. Issuance and publication of notices of violation.
2. Blocking orders in cases of repeated or serious non-compliance; and
3. Suspension of operations or access within the Philippines;

## **C. No Penalties on Parents or Minor**

No criminal, civil, or administrative liability shall be imposed on minors or their parents or guardians under this Act. Only platform providers shall be held liable under this Act.

**SEC. 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the National Privacy Commission (NPC), shall formulate the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) necessary for the implementation of this Act.

In formulating the IRR, the DICT shall consult, as necessary, the following agencies on matters within their respective mandates:

1. Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) – lead implementing agency;
2. National Privacy Commission (NPC) – privacy and data protection oversight;
3. Department of Justice – Office of Cybercrime (DOJ-OOC) – enforcement, investigation, and prosecution;
4. Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) – local implementation and community-based awareness programs;
5. Department of Education (DepEd) – public awareness, digital literacy, and school-based online safety programs;
6. Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) – child protection and welfare considerations; and
7. National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) – coordination with internet service providers (ISPs) and digital service providers.

**SEC. 9. *Review of the Law.*** – An independent review shall be conducted two (2) years after full implementation to assess:

- a. The effectiveness of age verification measures;
- b. Compliance with data privacy and protection standards;
- c. The impact of the Act on minors' online safety and wellbeing;
- d. The need to refine enforcement mechanisms or clarify regulated platform definitions.

**SEC. 11. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the DICT. Thereafter, funds necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the General Appropriations Act (GAA).

**SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SEC 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts of provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

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