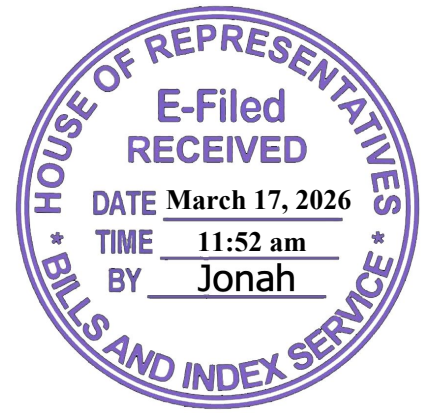


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Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 8603

Introduced by Hon. Julianne "Jam" L. Baronda

EXPLANATORY NOTE

18 The rapid growth of digital communication has significantly transformed the way
19 Filipinos engage in public discourse, exchange information, and interact with one
20 another. Social media platforms have become powerful tools for communication,
21 commerce, and civic participation. However, these same platforms have increasingly
22 been misused to commit acts that violate the rights of others, including cyberbullying,
23 harassment, impersonation, identity theft, fraud, and the dissemination of defamatory
24 or malicious content.

25 The ease with which individuals can create multiple or anonymous online identities has
26 contributed to the proliferation of such unlawful activities. Perpetrators frequently hide
27 behind fictitious or unverified accounts to evade accountability for acts that cause
28 serious harm to individuals, institutions, and the public at large.

29 Data from the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)
30 underscores the magnitude of cyber-related offenses in the country. According to the
31 "Briefer on Monitoring of Cyber-Related Crimes 2023–2024," the Philippines recorded
32 87,595 cybercrime incidents from March 2013 to October 2025, reflecting the growing
33 scale of cyber-enabled criminal activities nationwide. The same report identifies online
34 libel, illegal access, computer-related identity theft, computer-related fraud, data
35 interference, and system interference among the most frequently reported cyber
36 offenses, many of which are facilitated through the misuse of social media platforms and
37 anonymous digital identities.

38 DICT monitoring further reveals the increasing vulnerability of digital platforms to
39 abuse and cyber threats. In 2023 alone, 1,834 cyber incidents were recorded,
40 representing a 62.44 percent increase from the 1,129 incidents reported in 2022,
41 highlighting the rapid escalation of cyber threats affecting individuals, organizations,
42 and government institutions.

Recognizing the increasing risks associated with anonymous digital communication, the Philippine government has already taken steps to strengthen accountability in online and telecommunications systems. Through Republic Act No. 11934, Congress required all mobile subscribers to register their SIM cards using verified personal identification in order to prevent scams, fraud, and other crimes facilitated through anonymous communication channels.

The policy rationale behind the SIM Card Registration Act demonstrates the State's commitment to ensuring that digital communication tools are not misused for criminal activities while still protecting legitimate use and personal privacy. Just as anonymous SIM cards had been exploited for scams, phishing schemes, and harassment, anonymous social media accounts have likewise become instruments for committing cybercrimes, spreading misinformation, and violating the rights of others.

Given that mobile numbers are now registered identities under the SIM Card Registration Act, social media platforms—which often rely on mobile numbers for account creation and verification—should likewise adopt stronger identity authentication mechanisms to ensure accountability in digital spaces.

At the same time, many countries have begun implementing identity verification requirements for social media platforms. Jurisdictions such as China, Vietnam, Malaysia, and South Korea have adopted systems requiring identity authentication for users of major online platforms in order to deter cybercrime, protect minors, and improve accountability for digital activities. Other countries, including Thailand, Australia, and the United Kingdom, are also implementing or studying similar identity verification measures in response to increasing online harms.

In the Philippines, the government has already established a secure national identification framework through the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) pursuant to Republic Act No. 11055. PhilSys provides a reliable and efficient mechanism for verifying the identity of individuals while maintaining safeguards for personal data and privacy.

This proposed measure seeks to build upon these existing policies by requiring social media accounts to undergo identity verification through PhilSys authentication. While individuals may maintain multiple social media accounts, each account must be linked to a verified identity in order to discourage the proliferation of anonymous or fraudulent accounts frequently used to commit cybercrimes and violate the rights of others.

This measure does not seek to curtail freedom of expression. Rather, it ensures that the exercise of such freedom in digital spaces is accompanied by responsibility and accountability. Moreover, the bill incorporates safeguards to ensure that personal information collected for identity verification purposes is protected in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173.

By strengthening identity verification mechanisms in social media platforms and aligning with the policy framework established under the SIM Card Registration Act, this bill aims to foster a safer and more responsible digital environment while protecting citizens from cyber-enabled crimes and abuses.

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

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HON. JULIENNE JAM L. BARONDA

Representative

Lone District, Iloilo City

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HOUSE BILL NO. 8603

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**AN ACT REQUIRING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS TO BE VERIFIED
THROUGH THE PHILIPPINE IDENTIFICATION SYSTEM (PHILSYS),
PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS, 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 “**Verified Social Media Account Act.**”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote accountability, transparency, and responsibility in digital communication platforms. The State recognizes the growing influence of social media on public discourse, public safety, and national security. To prevent online fraud, impersonation, cybercrime, and misinformation, the State shall ensure that social media accounts are linked to verified identities through the national identification system while protecting personal data and privacy.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. For purposes of this Act:

- a. **Social Media Platform** – Any internet-based platform that allows users to create profiles, publish content, communicate, and interact with other users.
- b. **Verified Account** – A social media account that has undergone identity verification through the national identification system.
- c. **User** – Any natural person who creates or maintains a social media account.
- d. **PhilSys Identification** – The unique identification credentials issued under the national identification system administered by the Philippine Statistics Authority.

SECTION 4. Mandatory Social Media Identity Verification. All social media accounts operating within the Philippines shall undergo identity verification through the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys). Individuals may maintain multiple social

media accounts; however, each account must be linked to a verified identity through the PhilSys authentication system.

SECTION 5. PhilSys-Based Verification Requirements. Social media platforms operating in the Philippines shall conform to the following:

- a. Require users to verify their identity through the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys);
- b. Verification shall include authentication using the PhilSys Number (PSN) or other authorized PhilSys credentials; and
- c. Ensure that no social media account is activated unless the user's identity has been authenticated through the PhilSys system.

SECTION 6. Duties of Social Media Platforms. Social media platforms operating in the Philippines shall:

- a. Implement secure systems to authenticate users through the PhilSys verification system;
- b. Prevent and detect fraudulent or impersonation accounts;
- c. Ensure secure handling and encryption of identity verification data; and
- d. Comply with lawful requests from authorized government agencies as provided by law.

SECTION 7. Implementing Agencies. The implementation of this Act shall be jointly overseen by:

- a. the Department of Information and Communications Technology;
- b. the National Privacy Commission; and
- c. the Philippine Statistics Authority.

These agencies shall coordinate to establish secure systems enabling social media platforms to verify users through PhilSys.

SECTION 8. Penalties.

- a. **For Individuals:** Any person who intentionally uses false identities, falsified credentials, or attempts to bypass PhilSys verification shall be subject to:
 - i. A fine of ₱10,000 to ₱100,000;
 - ii. Suspension or termination of the account; or
 - iii. Both, at the discretion of the appropriate authority.
- b. **For Social Media Platforms:** Social media platforms that fail to implement the required PhilSys verification mechanisms shall be subject to administrative fines and possible restrictions on operations within the Philippines.

SECTION 9. Data Privacy Protection. All personal information collected under this Act shall be protected in accordance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012. Such information shall only be used for identity verification purposes and shall not be disclosed without lawful authority.

205 **SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** Within ninety (90) days
206 from the effectivity of this Act, the implementing agencies shall promulgate the
207 necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

208 **SECTION 11. Separability Clause.** If any provision of this Act is declared
209 unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

210 **SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.** All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and
211 regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

214 Approved,