



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Manila

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 8704

Introduced by **HON. YEVGENY VINCENTE B. EMANO**

**AN ACT REGULATING THE ACCESS OF MINORS TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS,
REQUIRING AGE VERIFICATION AND PARENTAL CONSENT MECHANISMS,
PROVIDING SAFEGUARDS FOR CHILDREN ONLINE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rapid expansion of social media platforms has transformed the way Filipinos communicate, learn, and participate in civic life. However, this digital transformation has also exposed minors to unprecedented risks, including cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation, exposure to harmful and age-inappropriate content, privacy violations, manipulative algorithmic design, and other forms of digital abuse.

Recent studies and enforcement reports under Republic Act No. 11930 (Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children Act), Republic Act No. 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act), and Republic Act No. 10173 (Data Privacy Act of 2012) demonstrate that Filipino children remain among the most vulnerable populations in the global digital environment. While these laws penalize specific unlawful acts, there remains a regulatory gap in proactively preventing minors—particularly children below thirteen (13) years of age—from accessing social media platforms without adequate safeguards.

The proposed “**Social Media Regulation and Protection Act**” seeks to address this gap by establishing a clear legal framework that:

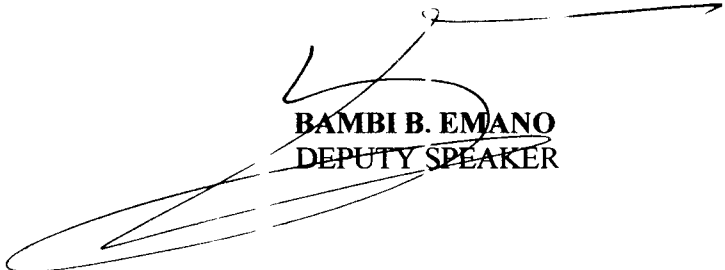
1. Requires age-restricted social media platforms operating in or offering services in the Philippines to implement accredited and privacy-preserving age-verification systems;
2. Mandates verifiable parental consent mechanisms for minors, especially children below thirteen (13) years old;

3. Ensures compliance with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and other applicable child protection laws;
4. Empowers the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the National Privacy Commission (NPC), to set standards, accredit verification systems, and enforce compliance;
5. Imposes proportionate administrative penalties for violations, while ensuring due process; and
6. Promotes digital literacy and nationwide awareness programs to strengthen parental guidance and responsible online engagement.

This measure does not seek to unduly restrict freedom of expression or access to information. Rather, it ensures that online platforms adopt age-appropriate design and responsible data practices consistent with the State's constitutional mandate to protect the youth and promote their holistic development. The bill balances child protection, privacy rights, innovation, and regulatory proportionality.

By institutionalizing safeguards at the platform level, rather than relying solely on reactive enforcement, the State affirms that the digital space must not be a lawless frontier where children are left unprotected.

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



BAMBI B. EMANO
DEPUTY SPEAKER



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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 and cited as the “Social Media Regulation and Protection Act.”

SECTION. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to:

(a) Uphold the constitutional mandate to protect and promote the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of the youth;

(b) Safeguard children from online harms, including but not limited to cyberbullying, online exploitation, exposure to harmful or age-inappropriate content, addictive or manipulative platform design, and unlawful data collection and profiling;

(c) Ensure that digital platforms operating within the Philippines adopt age-appropriate design and privacy-preserving measures consistent with Republic Act No. 10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, Republic Act No. 9775 (Anti-Child Pornography Act), Republic Act No. 11930 (Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children Act), and other applicable laws;

(d) Promote responsible digital citizenship and strengthen parental involvement in minors’ online engagement.

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

(a) **Minor** refers to any natural person below eighteen (18) years of age.

(b) **Child** refers to a minor below thirteen (13) years of age.

(c) **Age-Restricted Social Media Platform** refers to any website, application, or electronic service that:

1. Has as its primary or significant purpose the facilitation of online social interaction among two (2) or more end-users;
2. Allows users to create profiles or accounts;
3. Permits users to post, upload, share, or view user-generated content; and
4. Enables users to interact, communicate, or connect with other users.

This shall not include online services whose principal function is limited to electronic mail, short message services (SMS), enterprise collaboration tools, educational learning management systems, or cloud storage services, unless such services substantially function as social media platforms.

(d) **Age-Verification System** refers to a privacy-preserving and regulator-accredited mechanism that reliably determines or estimates a user's age using government-recognized credentials or equivalent secure authentication methods, without unnecessarily collecting or retaining personal data.

(e) **Parental Consent** refers to verifiable authorization granted by a parent or legal guardian for a minor's account creation, continued access, or processing of personal data on a social media platform.

(f) **Regulator** refers to the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the National Privacy Commission (NPC).

SECTION. 4. *Prohibition on Access by Children Below thirteen (13) years of age.* - As used in this Act:

(a) No age-restricted social media platform shall allow the creation, registration, or continued use of an account by a child below thirteen (13) years of age without verifiable parental consent.

(b) In the absence of verifiable parental consent, the platform shall deny account creation or immediately suspend or delete accounts reasonably determined to be operated by a child.

(c) Platforms shall establish reasonable procedures for age screening prior to account activation.

(d) Nothing in this Act shall preclude stricter age requirements adopted by platforms consistent with Philippine law.

SECTION 5. *Mandatory Age-Verification Systems.* -

(a) All age-restricted social media platforms operating in or offering services to users in the Philippines shall deploy age-verification systems accredited by the Regulator.

(b) Age-verification systems shall:

1. Minimize personal data collection and processing;
2. Prohibit retention of identification documents beyond what is strictly necessary for verification;
3. Transmit to the platform only confirmation of age or age bracket, and not the user's full identity;
4. Be subject to periodic independent audit and certification by the Regulator;

5. Comply strictly with Republic Act No. 10173 and other applicable data protection and cybersecurity laws.

(c) Platforms shall conduct data protection impact assessments for their age-assurance systems.

SECTION. 6. *Parental Consent Mechanisms.* - Age-restricted social media platforms shall establish secure and verifiable parental consent procedures, which may include:

(a) Submission of government-issued identification or equivalent digital identity credentials;

(b) Biometric, digital signature, or secure electronic authentication methods;

(c) Payment verification methods or similar mechanisms demonstrating adult status;

(d) One-time authentication linked to a parent or legal guardian's verified account.

Parents or legal guardians shall have the right to revoke consent at any time. Upon revocation, the platform shall promptly suspend or delete the minor's account and cease further data processing, except as may be required by law.

SECTION. 7. *Duties and Responsibilities of Government Agencies.* - The DICT, in coordination with the NTC and the NPC, shall:

(a) Promulgate implementing rules and standards for age verification, parental consent, and age-appropriate platform design;

(b) Establish an accreditation framework for age-verification providers;

(c) Monitor compliance and conduct audits;

(d) Receive complaints and investigate violations;

(e) Impose administrative penalties in accordance with this Act and existing laws;

(f) Order appropriate access restrictions or recommend enforcement actions against non-compliant platforms, subject to due process.

SECTION. 8. *Penalties-*

(a) For Social Media Platforms:

An administrative fine of not less than Five Million Pesos (₱5,000,000.00) but not more than Ten Million Pesos (₱10,000,000.00) for each act of non-compliance, depending on gravity, frequency, and degree of negligence;

A daily penalty of not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱100,000.00) for continuing violations;

Suspension or restriction of operations within the Philippines upon repeated or willful violations, subject to notice and hearing requirements and other due process safeguards.

(b) For Third-Party Providers:

An administrative fine of not less than One Million Pesos (₱1,000,000.00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (₱5,000,000.00) for breach of age-verification standards or data privacy violations;

Suspension or revocation of accreditation.

The imposition of administrative penalties under this Act shall be without prejudice to criminal, civil, or other liabilities under existing laws.

SECTION. 9. *Digital Literacy and Public Awareness Program.* - To further strengthen the protection of minors online:

(a) The Department of Education (DepEd), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and DICT shall develop and integrate mandatory digital literacy and online safety modules in primary and secondary curricula, including modules on responsible social media use, data privacy, cyberbullying prevention, and critical content evaluation.

(b) The DICT shall establish a nationwide public awareness campaign promoting parental guidance, online safety best practices, and reporting mechanisms.

(c) Social media platforms shall provide accessible in-platform educational resources for Filipino users regarding online safety and data protection.

SECTION. 10. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DICT, NTC, and NPC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in coordination with the NTC and the NPC, shall promulgate the necessary Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

SECTION. 12. *Separability Clause.*- If any part or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION. 13. *Repealing Clause.*- All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with 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,