

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **8915**



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE PATRICK MICHAEL D. VARGAS

AN ACT
MANDATING THE BLOCKING OF ADULT CONTENTS AND LEWD
INTERNET SITES IN COMPUTER SHOPS, INTERNET CAFES, AND
SIMILAR ESTABLISHMENTS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS,
AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rapid growth in the use of internet cafes and computer shops in the Philippines has created both opportunities and challenges for ensuring safe digital spaces, especially for the youth and the general public. While these establishments provide affordable internet access to many Filipinos, reports and existing local ordinances highlight significant risks related to unregulated access to adult content and lewd websites, which can contribute to moral and social harm.

A 2024 assessment by Plan International Pilipinas revealed that Filipino children and youth are still significantly exposed to unsafe online content and behaviors even within supervised spaces. Moreover, the Foundation for Media Alternatives documented an alarming rise in cases of online sexual abuse and exploitation of children (OSAEC). Despite protective legislation such as the Anti-Child Pornography Act, minors remain exposed to harmful online content and abuse.

In response to these challenges, the City of Naga enacted Ordinance No. 2013-005, which mandates the installation of filtering software to block access to adult content, satanic, and violent websites in internet cafes in its jurisdiction and requires transparent partitions to prevent illicit use¹ However, enforcement and implementation remain inconsistent at the national level.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic spurred operational guidelines for internet cafes by local governments such as Manila, emphasizing

¹ An Ordinance Prescribing Rules and Regulations for the Operation of Commercial Internet Cafes Throughout the City of Naga, Cebu (2013-005)

operational safety protocols but not specifically addressing internet content filtering.² This gap reaffirms the need for a comprehensive national policy mandating blocking mechanisms that restrict access to harmful websites, while balancing the essential public access function of computer shops.

The proposed “*Internet Safe Youth Spaces Act*” seeks to establish a uniform, enforceable framework nationwide requiring internet cafes and similar establishments to install effective blocking software against adult content and lewd sites, impose penalties for non-compliance, and empower citizens to report violations confidentially to authorities. In doing so, the State aims to protect the youth and promote community welfare, while preserving public digital spaces.

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



REP. PATRICK MICHAEL D. VARGAS
Fifth District, Quezon City

² Manila Executive Order No. 37 (2020)

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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 as the “*Internet Safe Youth Spaces Act*”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to protect the moral, physical, and mental well-being of its citizens, especially the youth, from all forms of harm, including adult contents and lewd content accessible online. The State shall ensure that computer shops and similar establishments do not serve as venues for the distribution or viewing of such materials.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this Act, the term:

- a) “*Computer Shop/Internet Cafe*” means any establishment providing public access to computers and the internet for a fee;
- b) “*Adult Contents and Lewd Sites*” shall refer to websites containing prurient interests, depicting sexual acts, nudity, or lewd conduct that violate laws against obscenity as defined under Philippine law and regulations;
- c) “*Blocking Software/Technology*” any industry-recognized and effective filter, software, or technological means capable of preventing access to adult content or lewd content.

SECTION 4. Mandatory Blocking of Adult Content and Lewd Sites. All operators, owners, and managers of computer shops, internet cafes, and establishments offering public computer access are required to install, operate, and maintain effective blocking software or technologies on all terminals and systems to prevent access to adult content and lewd internet sites.

SECTION 5. Oversight and Supervision. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of Education (DepEd), shall issue the guidelines for approved blocking software or similar technologies on all terminals and systems to prevent access to adult content and lewd internet sites.

SECTION 6. Penalties. Any establishment that fails to comply with this Act shall, after due notice and hearing, be subject to the following:

First Offense: Fine of not less than twenty thousand pesos (PHP 20,000)

Second Offense: Suspension of Business of up to 6 months and a fine of not less than fifty thousand pesos (PHP 50, 000)

Third and Subsequent Offenses: Revocation of the business permit and permanent closure of the establishment. Furthermore, the owner, operator, or person responsible shall be barred from registering, applying for, or owning any computer shop, internet café, or similar establishment offering public computer access for a period of ten (10) years from the date of the revocation.

SECTION 7. Duty to Report. Operators and employees of such establishments are required to report attempts to bypass or disable blocking mechanisms. Knowingly allowing access or assisting in the disabling of such controls shall result in corresponding administrative and criminal sanctions.

Moreover, any citizen or member of the public who has knowledge of or reasonable suspicion of violation of this Act by any establishment may report such information to the DICT, DILG, and the Local Government Units (LGUs). The authorities are mandated to provide accessible and confidential channels for such reports and to act promptly on verified complaints.

SECTION 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Department of Health, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, shall prescribe the necessary rules and regulations to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 9. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions hereof.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,