

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Constitution Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9163



Introduced by: **REPRESENTATIVE ERIC L. OLIVAREZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article XIV, Sections 1 and 2 of the 1987 Constitution mandate the State to protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and to take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. The Constitution likewise directs the State to establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education responsive to the needs of the people and society.

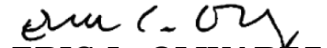
In the modern digital era, access to educational materials and learning resources has increasingly become dependent on technology and internet connectivity. However, many Filipino learners, particularly those enrolled in public schools and those residing in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas, continue to face difficulties in accessing updated textbooks, reference materials, and other educational resources due to financial limitations, insufficient library facilities, and unequal access to digital infrastructure.

This proposed measure seeks to institutionalize the Philippine Online Library as a centralized and accessible digital repository of textbooks, instructional materials, and other educational resources for elementary and secondary learners. Through the digitization of prescribed learning materials and the utilization of information and communications technology, the measure aims to expand educational access, promote digital inclusion, and strengthen the delivery of public education throughout the country.

The bill likewise encourages inter-agency coordination among the Department of Education (DepEd), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and the National Library of the Philippines (NLP) to ensure the proper development, management, and maintenance of the digital platform and educational repository, while remaining consistent with existing laws on intellectual property, cybersecurity, and data privacy.

By leveraging technology to improve access to quality educational resources, this measure seeks to help bridge the digital divide, support learners and educators, and advance a more inclusive, modern, and resilient educational system for present and future generations.

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


ERIC L. OLIVAREZ

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE
LIBRARY AND THE DIGITIZATION OF ALL PRESCRIBED
REFERENCES FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. Title - This Act shall be known as the "*Philippine Online Library Act*."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - Pursuant to Article XIV, Sections 1 and 2 of the 1987 Constitution, the State shall protect and promote the right of all citizens to quality education at all levels and shall take appropriate steps to make such education accessible to all. The State shall likewise establish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education responsive to the needs of the people and society, and shall provide for a system of free public education in the elementary and secondary levels.

Towards this end, the State recognizes the vital role of information and communications technology in improving access to educational resources and advancing inclusive and equitable learning opportunities. The State shall therefore endeavor to establish and maintain a Philippine Online Library that shall provide learners, particularly those enrolled in public schools, with access to digitized textbooks, instructional materials, and other educational resources, subject to existing intellectual property laws and other applicable laws, rules, and regulations.

The State shall further promote digital literacy, technological innovation, and equal access to educational materials, especially in underserved and geographically isolated areas, through coordinated efforts among relevant government agencies and stakeholders.

SECTION 3. *The Philippine Online Library* - The Department of Education (DepEd), in coordination with the National Library of the Philippines (NLP) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall establish, operate, and maintain the Philippine Online Library.

The Philippine Online Library shall serve as a centralized digital repository of digitized textbooks, learning modules, reference materials, open educational resources, and other instructional materials prescribed or authorized by DepEd for elementary and secondary education.

The digitization, reproduction, storage, and distribution of copyrighted materials under this Act shall be undertaken in accordance with existing intellectual property laws, licensing agreements, fair use limitations, and other applicable laws and regulations.

The DICT shall provide the necessary technological infrastructure, cybersecurity protection, and systems maintenance for the online platform, while the National Library of the Philippines shall assist in digital archiving, preservation, and content management.

The Philippine Online Library shall be made accessible free of charge to learners, teachers, and the public through an online platform, subject to reasonable rules and security protocols established by the implementing agencies.

The implementing agencies shall ensure that the platform complies with existing laws and standards on data privacy, cybersecurity, accessibility for persons with disabilities, and digital inclusion.

SECTION 4. *Transfer of Serviceable Computer Equipment from Government Agencies and Instrumentalities*. - Subject to existing auditing, accounting, inventory, cybersecurity, and government property disposal laws, rules, and regulations, National Government Agencies (NGAs), Government Owned or Controlled Corporations (GOCCs), Government Financial Institutions (GFIs), and Local Government Units (LGUs) may transfer serviceable and unutilized computer equipment and related devices to DepEd schools for educational use.

Prior to transfer, the DICT or the authorized information technology personnel of the transferring agency shall ensure that all devices are serviceable, properly sanitized of confidential or sensitive data, and compliant with applicable cybersecurity standards.

Schools with inadequate access to computer devices and those located in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs) shall be prioritized in the distribution of donated or transferred equipment.

The DepEd shall maintain an inventory and monitoring system for all transferred equipment under this Act.

SECTION 5. *Additional Online Educational Materials* - The DepEd, in coordination with the National Library of the Philippines and other relevant government agencies, educational institutions, and stakeholders, shall supplement the Philippine Online Library with additional educational materials, including Filipiniana resources, local literature, indigenous knowledge systems, historical archives, multimedia educational content, and open educational resources (OERs), to further enrich the learning experience of Filipino students.

Priority shall be given to the development and inclusion of culturally relevant, age appropriate, and curriculum aligned materials.

The DepEd shall also prioritize the development and use of open educational resources whenever practicable.

SECTION 6. *Custody of the Digitized Textbooks and Reference Materials*- The DepEd shall serve as the lead implementing agency and shall exercise primary supervision over the development and utilization of the Philippine Online Library.

The National Library of the Philippines shall have joint custody of all digitized archival and reference materials and shall provide technical assistance on preservation, cataloguing, and digital archiving standards.

The DICT shall be responsible for the maintenance, cybersecurity protection, technological management, and continuous improvement of the digital infrastructure and online systems of the Philippine Online Library.

SECTION 7. *Appropriations*. - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the DepEd and the DICT. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

In the allocation of funds, priority shall be given to public schools in underserved, remote, and geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs).

SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, in coordination with the DICT, the National Library of the Philippines, and other relevant agencies, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

The implementing agencies shall conduct periodic assessments of the Philippine Online Library to ensure continued relevance, accessibility, technological adequacy, and curriculum alignment.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any part or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other parts hereof not affected thereby shall remain valid.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

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

Approved.