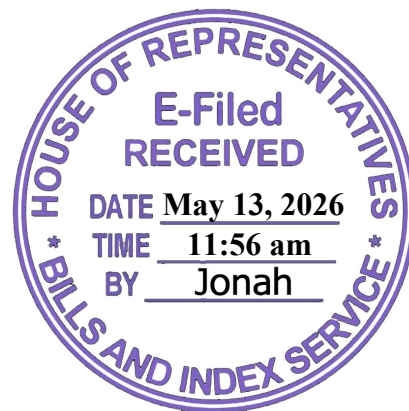




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



House Bill No. 9237

Introduced by:
HON. KING GEORGE LEANDRO ANTONIO V. COLLANTES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rise of social media has transformed the way young people learn, communicate, and engage with the world. While digital platforms provide unprecedented opportunities for education, creativity, and civic participation, they have also exposed children to increasing risks such as cyberbullying, online exploitation, compulsive digital behavior, harmful content, and algorithm-driven engagement systems designed to maximize screen time rather than protect well-being.

The Philippines, where internet and social media usage among the youth remains among the highest globally, faces the urgent challenge of protecting children in digital spaces. Existing regulatory frameworks address unlawful online conduct but remain insufficient to respond to the evolving architecture of modern social media platforms and the behavioral design systems that influence the habits, mental health, and development of minors.

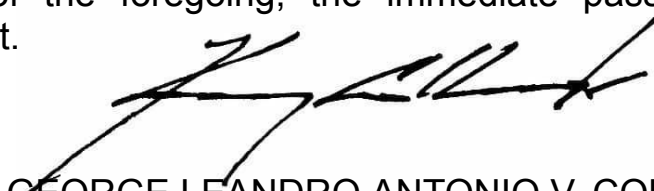
Globally, governments have begun adopting stronger regulatory measures in response to these concerns. Australia recently enacted landmark legislation imposing minimum age restrictions for social media

access and strengthening platform accountability mechanisms to protect minors from harmful online exposure. France passed legislation restricting social media access for children below fifteen (15) years of age without verified parental consent. The United Kingdom, through its Online Safety Act and Age-Appropriate Design Code, now requires digital platforms to implement child-centered safety and privacy standards by default. Likewise in Southeast Asia, Indonesia has intensified its regulation of digital platforms through stronger child protection, electronic systems regulation, and content moderation rules aimed at addressing online exploitation, harmful content, and platform accountability. These developments reflect a growing international consensus that protecting children online is no longer solely a matter of parental supervision, but also a legitimate and necessary area of public policy and platform regulation.

This proposed “Social Media Safety for Children Act” adopts a measured approach in addressing these emerging risks. Rather than imposing broad or punitive restrictions on children and families, the bill establishes clear and proportionate obligations on social media platforms to create safer digital environments for minors. Considering that modern online harms are often embedded not merely in content itself but in platform design choices that encourage compulsive engagement and excessive use, the measure requires platforms to implement safeguards against addictive features such as autoplay systems, manipulative notifications, and algorithmic recommendations directed at minors.

Ultimately, this measure seeks to protect Filipino children from the harmful effects of unregulated social media usage. In recognizing that child protection in the digital age requires utmost responsibility, we must therefore enact strong public policies that ensure that the systems, algorithms, and engagement models of digital platforms shaping online behavior must prioritize the safety and protection of Filipino children.

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



KING GEORGE LEANDRO ANTONIO V. COLLANTES
Representative, 3rd District, Batangas



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HOUSE BILL NO. 9237

Introduced by: HON. KING GEORGE LEANDRO ANTONIO V. COLLANTES

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING A MINIMUM AGE FOR SOCIAL MEDIA USE,
REGULATING CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS,
PRESCRIBING OBLIGATIONS FOR SOCIAL MEDIA PROVIDERS, AND
PROVIDING PENALTIES THEREFOR

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 Safety for Children Act."

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is the policy of the State to promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of our youth. The State shall also provide special protection for children from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. Towards this end, the State shall adopt preventive measures to regulate minors' exposure to social media, minimize distractions from mobile devices and electronic gadgets, and safeguard children from online harms in support of holistic development and safe learning environments.

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

- a. Age-Restricted User refers to a child who has not reached sixteen (16) years of age.
- b. Social Media Platform refers to any internet-based service, application, website, or computer program primarily intended to enable online social interaction among users and to allow content sharing thereon.
- c. Social Media Platform Provider refers to any entity that owns or operates a social media platform.
- d. Third-Party Age Verification Provider refers to any entity engaged by platforms to verify user age or identity.

SEC. 4. Age-restriction for Social Media Platforms. - Children below sixteen (16) years of age shall be prohibited from registering, accessing, or maintaining accounts on any social media platform.

Social media platform providers shall implement reliable age-verification mechanisms to enforce this restriction.

SEC. 5. Duties of Social Media Platform Providers. - Social media platform providers shall:

- a. Adopt effective age and identity verification systems, including but not limited to ID authentication, face recognition, or comparable technologies;
- b. Conduct regular audits to detect and deactivate accounts held by age-restricted users;
- c. Prevent circumvention of age restrictions through duplicate or reactivated accounts;
- d. Provide functional parental control and content-filtering tools;
- e. Establish prompt reporting and response mechanisms for underage
- f. Ensure that platform design does not promote compulsive or excessive use, including limiting autoplay features, addictive notifications, and algorithmic recommendations directed at age-restricted users.

SEC. 6. Role of the Department of Information and Communications Technology. - The Department of Information and

Communications Technology (DICT) shall serve as the primary implementing agency of this Act. It shall:

- a. Monitor compliance of social media platform providers and third-party age verification providers with the minimum age restriction and other requirements under this Act;
- b. Establish accessible reporting mechanisms for violations;
- c. Conduct investigations, motu proprio or upon complaint, on alleged violations of this Act;
- d. Issue Disabling Orders directing the takedown, removal, or deactivation of accounts found to be in violation of the minimum age restriction;
- e. Impose administrative sanctions and penalties in accordance with this Act; and
- f. Coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Education (DepEd), National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), National Privacy Commission (NPC), Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC), relevant government agencies, and accredited non-government organizations to ensure consistent and child-sensitive implementation of this Act, including the conduct of awareness campaigns and community-based programs on responsible social media use and digital well-being.

SEC. 7. *Disabling Orders and Network-Level Enforcement.* - Upon determination that a social media account is owned, operated, or used by an age-restricted user in violation of this Act, the DICT shall issue a Disabling Order directing the immediate removal or deactivation of such account.

Social media platform providers shall comply with the Disabling Order within five (5) days from receipt thereof.

In case of failure or refusal to comply, the DICT shall notify the NTC, which shall direct internet service providers to implement appropriate technical measures, including but not limited to domain, URL, or IP blocking, solely for purposes of enforcing the Disabling Order.

The NTC shall monitor compliance by internet service providers and submit periodic reports to the DICT.

SEC. 8. *Data Privacy.* - All personal information collected pursuant to this Act shall strictly comply with Republic Act No. 10173 or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012". Data collected shall be limited, secured, and retained only for lawful purposes under this Act and protected through reasonable safeguards.

SEC. 9. *Penalties.* - Any social media platform provider or third-party age verification provider that fails to comply with this Act shall be subject to the following administrative penalties:

- a. A fine of not less than One Million Pesos (Php1,000,000) but not exceeding Ten Million Pesos (Php10,000,000) per violation;
- b. A daily fine of One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php100,000) for each day of continuing violation after due notice; and
- c. Suspension or revocation of operations within the Philippines for repeated or willful non-compliance.

These penalties shall be without prejudice to prosecution under existing administrative, civil, or criminal laws.

SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - The DICT, in coordination with DSWD, DepEd, NTC, NPC, CW, relevant government agencies, and other private stakeholders, shall promulgate the rules and regulations within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.* - All other laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, administrative orders, rules and regulations, issuances, or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,