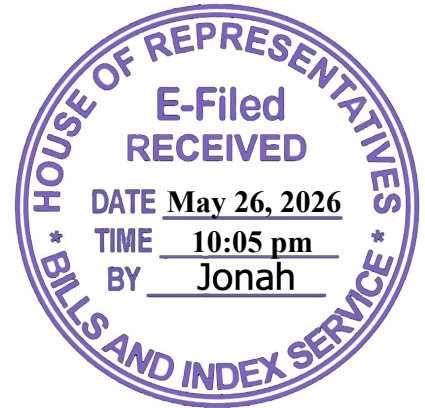


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 9468



Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The law binds every Filipino. Under the Civil Code, ignorance of the law excuses no one from compliance therewith.¹ This rule is indispensable to public order, for no legal system can function if citizens may evade compliance simply by claiming unfamiliarity with the law. But the same rule carries an equally important obligation on the part of the State: if the people are bound by law, the law must be reasonably accessible, knowable, and understandable to them.

The Supreme Court has long recognized that publication is essential to the binding force of laws. In *Tañada v. Tuvera*, the Court held that publication is indispensable because the people must be informed of the rules that govern them.² The 1987 Constitution likewise recognizes the right of the people to information on matters of public concern and guarantees access to official records, documents, papers pertaining to official acts, transactions, or decisions, and government research data used as a basis for policy development, subject only to limitations provided by law.³ These principles reflect a deeper democratic premise: the law is not the private property of lawyers, publishers, institutions, or government offices. It belongs to the people because it governs the people.

At present, however, public access to Philippine law remains fragmented. Official legal texts may be available online, but they are often scattered across different repositories, presented as originally enacted or promulgated, and not always

¹ Republic Act No. 386, art. 3 (1949) (Phil.).

² *Tañada v. Tuvera*, G.R. No. L-63915, 146 SCRA 446, 453-54 (Dec. 29, 1986) (Phil.).

³ CONST. (1987), art. III, § 7 (Phil.).

consolidated with later amendments, repeals, implementing rules, or related jurisprudence. A citizen attempting to understand a law amended several times may have to locate the original statute, track each amendatory law, determine which provisions remain in force, consult implementing rules, and search for relevant jurisprudence. For lawyers and institutions with paid legal databases, this may be a routine. For workers, farmers, fisherfolk, students, microentrepreneurs, barangay officials, and ordinary citizens, this can be practically impossible.

This difficulty is not merely technical. It is an access-to-justice problem. The Philippines continues to face serious gaps in legal assistance, rule-of-law performance, and digital inclusion. The World Justice Project has reported that the Philippines ranked 97th out of 143 countries in the 2025 Rule of Law Index, and 13th out of 15 in the East Asia and Pacific region.⁴ Earlier legal-needs data also showed that many Filipinos experiencing legal problems do not obtain formal legal help.⁵ At the same time, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported that only 48.8% of households had internet connection in 2024, confirming that digital public services must be designed for low-bandwidth, mobile-first, and offline or assisted-access conditions.⁶

This bill, therefore, seeks to establish the “*Philippine Open Law System*,” a free, consolidated, continuously updated, searchable, accessible, and publicly available legal information platform for Philippine laws, rules, regulations, jurisprudence, and other legal issuances. This creates the public infrastructure necessary to help Filipinos locate and understand the law they are already required to obey.

This measure should be understood as part of the same transparency agenda advanced by the proposed Senate Bill No. 1432, or the People’s Freedom of Information Act. Freedom of information strengthens the citizen’s right to request and obtain government records. This bill strengthens the State’s corresponding duty to proactively supply the most basic public information in a democracy: the law itself. It ensures that statutes, rules, regulations, jurisprudence, and other public legal materials are not merely published in scattered form, but made available through an authenticated, searchable, reusable, and accessible public system. In this sense, the proposed Philippine Open Law System is the supply-side infrastructure that gives practical force to the demand-side right protected by freedom of information.

⁴ WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT, *The Philippines Ranks 97 out of 143 in the WJP Rule of Law Index 1* (2025). https://worldjusticeproject.org/sites/default/files/documents/Philippines_3.pdf

⁵ WORLD JUSTICE PROJECT, *Global Insights on Access to Justice 2019: Philippines* (2019); see also United Nations Dep’t of Econ. & Soc. Affs., *Access to Justice Project*.

⁶ Philippine Statistics Authority, *Percentage of Households with Internet Connection Increased to 48.8 Percent in 2024; Two in Every Three Individuals Aged 10 Years and Over Used the Internet* (July 21, 2025).

The proposed system shall preserve official source texts, provide consolidated versions of laws and issuances, maintain amendment histories and prior versions, support open and machine-readable formats, and progressively integrate local ordinances and agency issuances. It shall also include accessibility measures for persons with disabilities, low-connectivity communities, and citizens who rely on public terminals, barangay facilities, libraries, schools, or local government offices for access to digital services.

The bill also anticipates the responsible use of artificial intelligence in public legal information. Legal AI tools may assist citizens in searching, summarizing, translating, or navigating legal texts, but they must not be allowed to replace lawyers, courts, or competent legal authorities. Empirical studies have shown that even specialized legal AI tools may produce inaccurate or fabricated legal outputs, making safeguards indispensable.⁷ For this reason, the bill requires source citation, accuracy testing, human oversight, hallucination-risk monitoring, public feedback mechanisms, data privacy compliance, cybersecurity protection, and clear disclaimers stating that AI-generated outputs are not legal advice or official interpretations of the law.

The measure also carefully avoids displacing private legal publishers or legal technology providers. The official text of the law must remain free and public, but private entities may continue to offer annotations, commentaries, analytics, digests, legal education materials, and value-added research tools. In this manner, the bill protects the public character of legal texts while preserving legitimate innovation and enterprise built around legal analysis.

Other jurisdictions have already demonstrated that free public legal databases are feasible and useful. The European Union operates EUR-Lex, which provides access to EU law, consolidated texts, case law, and the Official Journal.⁸ India maintains the India Code, a repository of central and state laws linked with subordinate legislation.⁹ Australia's AustLII provides free and independent access to Australasian legal materials.¹⁰ These models show that a modern legal system must not only publish laws, but also organize them in a way that citizens can actually use.

⁷ Varun Magesh et al., *Hallucination-Free? Assessing the Reliability of Leading AI Legal Research Tools*, 22 J. EMPIRICAL LEGAL STUD. 216 (2025); see also Stanford Inst. for Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence, *AI on Trial: Legal Models Hallucinate in 1 out of 6 (or More) Benchmarking Queries* (May 23, 2024).

⁸ EUR-Lex, *EU Law* (providing access to the Official Journal of the European Union, EU law, case law, consolidated texts, and summaries of legislation). <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/homepage.html>

⁹ India Code, *Digital Repository of All Central and State Acts* (containing enforced central and state acts linked with rules, regulations, notifications, orders, circulars, ordinances, and statutes).

¹⁰ Australasian Legal Information Institute, *AustLII* (providing free and independent access to Australasian law). <https://www.austlii.edu.au/index.shtml>.

The Philippines must do the same. Access to law is not a luxury service. It is an essential condition for meaningful citizenship, accountable government, access to justice, and the rule of law. A right that cannot be found, read, or understood is a right diminished in practice. A duty imposed by an inaccessible law is a burden unevenly carried by those least able to navigate the legal system.

This bill gives practical effect to the constitutional right to information, strengthens public legal literacy, supports access to justice, and builds digital public infrastructure for the rule of law. It affirms a simple but fundamental principle: the law is already the people's. The State must finally put it in their hands.

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



JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ

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HOUSE BILL NO. 9468

Introduced by **REP. JAVIER MIGUEL L. BENITEZ**

AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE OPEN LAW SYSTEM, PROVIDING FOR A FREE, CONSOLIDATED, UPDATED, AND ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC DATABASE OF PHILIPPINE LAWS, RULES, REGULATIONS, AND JURISPRUDENCE, INSTITUTIONALIZING SAFEGUARDS FOR AI-ASSISTED LEGAL INFORMATION SERVICES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “ *Open Access to Law Act.*”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of the people to information on matters of public concern, promote access to justice, strengthen the rule of law, and ensure that the laws binding the people are reasonably accessible, searchable, updated, and understandable.

The State recognizes that the legal system cannot rest solely on the doctrine that ignorance of the law excuses no one from compliance therewith, without a corresponding public obligation to make the law knowable to the people. Laws, rules, regulations, and jurisprudence are public legal materials issued in the name of the Republic and shall be made available to the public without unreasonable financial, technological, linguistic, or geographic barriers.

The State further recognizes that the right to information has both a demand-side and a supply-side dimension. While freedom of information mechanisms enable

citizens to request access to public records, the State must also proactively make essential public legal information available in accessible, authenticated, searchable, and reusable form. The law itself, being the foundation of public rights, duties, obligations, and accountability, shall be treated as core transparency infrastructure.

Towards this end, the State shall establish and maintain a free, consolidated, continuously updated, and publicly accessible legal information system for Philippine laws, rules, regulations, and jurisprudence, while preserving the independence of the Judiciary, the constitutional powers of Congress, the rights of persons under data privacy laws, and the legitimate role of private legal publishers in providing commentary, analysis, and value-added services.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall be defined as follows:

- (a) *“An AI-assisted legal information service”* refers to any artificial intelligence, machine learning, natural language processing, chatbot, or similar digital tool officially integrated into or linked with the Philippine Open Law System to assist users in searching, summarizing, translating, or navigating public legal information.
- (b) *“Authenticated digital copy”* refers to a digital copy made available through the System that has been verified as complete, genuine, and traceable to the official source text.
- (c) *“Jurisprudence”* refers to the decisions and final resolutions of the Supreme Court forming part of the legal system pursuant to Article 8 of the Civil Code. Decisions, resolutions, and issuances of lower courts, collegiate courts, quasi-judicial agencies, and constitutional bodies may be included in the System as public legal information, subject to arrangements with the issuing body and applicable rules on confidentiality, privacy, and publication.
- (d) *“Official source text”* refers to the legal text officially enacted, issued, promulgated, filed, released, or certified by the competent government body.
- (e) *“Public legal information”* refers to the Constitution, statutes, presidential issuances, administrative rules and regulations, local ordinances, treaties and international agreements of public concern, jurisprudence, procedural rules, and other issuances of binding legal effect.
- (f) *“Reference consolidation”* refers to a public convenience version of a law, rule, regulation, or issuance that incorporates amendments, repeals, suspensions,

effectivity dates, and other relevant changes based on available official source texts. A reference consolidation shall not constitute an official interpretation of law and shall not prevail over the official source text.

(g) *“The Philippine Open Law System”* refers to the official public legal information platform established under this Act.

SEC. 4. *Establishment of the Philippine Open Law System.* – There is hereby established the “Philippine Open Law System”, which shall serve as the official national digital public infrastructure for access to Philippine legal information.

The System shall provide the public with free access to authenticated digital copies of official source texts and, where available, reference consolidations prepared for public convenience. It shall be searchable, mobile-responsive, low-bandwidth compatible, accessible to persons with disabilities, and designed to support use by ordinary citizens, students, public officers, barangay officials, legal aid providers, courts, lawyers, businesses, and civil society organizations.

The System shall not replace existing publication, promulgation, filing, or effectivity requirements under the Civil Code, the Administrative Code of 1987, the Rules of Court, jurisprudence, and other applicable laws. Inclusion in or omission from the System shall not, by itself, determine the effectivity, validity, or enforceability of any law, rule, regulation, decision, or issuance.

SEC. 5. *Legal Effect of Official Source Texts and Reference Consolidations.* – Authenticated digital copies of official source texts made available through the System shall serve as official digital reference copies for public access, subject to verification protocols adopted under this Act.

Reference consolidations shall be prepared solely as public legal information tools. They shall not amend, repeal, modify, interpret, or determine the legal effect of any law, rule, regulation, decision, or issuance. In case of conflict between an official source text and a reference consolidation, the official source text shall prevail.

No consolidation, summary, annotation, search result, metadata tag, explanatory note, or AI-generated output appearing in the System shall be considered an official interpretation of law, a legal opinion of the government, or a binding ruling, unless separately issued by a competent authority in accordance with law.

Each reference consolidation shall identify the official source texts used, the amendments incorporated, the date of latest update, and any unresolved consolidation

issue requiring verification by the user, the issuing agency, counsel, or the competent authority.

SEC. 6. *Philippine Open Law Council.* - There is hereby created a "*Philippine Open Law Council*," which shall oversee policy direction, technical standards, authenticity protocols, consolidation rules, open-data standards, accessibility measures, AI safeguards, and inter-agency coordination under this Act.

The Council shall be chaired by the Secretary of Justice and co-chaired by the Secretary of Information and Communications Technology. It shall include representatives from the office administering the Official Gazette, the University of the Philippines Law Center through the Office of the National Administrative Register, the National Library of the Philippines, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Public Attorney's Office, and such other agencies as may be necessary under the implementing rules.

The Senate, the House of Representatives, the Supreme Court, constitutional commissions, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, legal aid organizations, state universities and colleges, and civil society organizations working on access to justice may be invited as institutional partners or observers, subject to their respective constitutional mandates and internal rules.

Nothing in this Act shall authorize the Council or any executive agency to revise, alter, suppress, or control official records belonging to Congress, the Judiciary, constitutional commissions, or local government units, or independent bodies.

SEC. 7. *Coverage of the System.* - The System shall progressively include authenticated digital copies of official source texts and, where available, reference consolidations of the Constitution, Republic Acts, Commonwealth Acts, Batas Pambansa, Presidential Decrees, Executive Orders, Administrative Orders, Proclamations, Memorandum Circulars, implementing rules and regulations, administrative rules filed with the Office of the National Administrative Register ("ONAR"), Supreme Court decisions and rules, treaties and international agreements of public concern, and other public legal information determined by the Council to be appropriate for inclusion.

Local ordinances and local issuances shall be integrated in phases through coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the concerned local government units. The Council shall prescribe standards to ensure that local legal materials uploaded to the System are authenticated, traceable, and clearly identified as local issuances.

SEC. 8. *Relationship with ONAR and Duties of National Government Agencies.*

- For administrative rules and regulations required by law to be filed with the Office of the National Administrative Register, filing with ONAR shall remain the operative filing requirement. The System shall, to the greatest extent practicable, ingest, index, or link to administrative rules and regulations from ONAR in order to avoid duplicative filing burdens on agencies.

Where legal material is not required to be filed with ONAR, or where the material is not otherwise available in authenticated digital form, the issuing agency shall transmit to the System an authenticated digital copy in the format and within the period prescribed by the Council.

In case of unjustified failure to transmit, update, or correct covered public legal information after written notice, the Council may issue a compliance directive. Continued non-compliance shall be referred to the proper disciplining authority, the Civil Service Commission, the Office of the Ombudsman, or other competent body, as may be appropriate under existing laws and rules. The Council shall include material non-compliance in its annual report to Congress.

Failure to transmit an issuance to the System shall not dispense with publication or filing requirements under existing law. However, the unjustified failure of a responsible public officer to transmit covered issuances after notice and a reasonable opportunity to comply shall constitute administrative neglect of duty, without prejudice to other liabilities under applicable laws.

SEC. 9. *Consolidation, Version Control, and Legal Integrity.* - The Council shall adopt uniform rules for legal consolidation, citation, metadata, amendment tracking, repeal notation, effectivity tagging, and version control. Each legal text in the System shall preserve the relationship between the original law or issuance and subsequent amendments, repeals, modifications, implementing rules, and relevant jurisprudence, whenever available.

The System shall maintain an archive of prior versions of laws and issuances to preserve legal certainty, support historical research, and protect rights arising from past transactions. Corrections to the System shall be transparent, time-stamped, and traceable to the responsible office or official source.

SEC. 10. *Access for Geographically Isolated, Disadvantaged, and Low-Connectivity Communities.* - The System shall be designed for the actual conditions of the Philippines, including areas with limited internet access, low digital literacy, and limited access to lawyers.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology, in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government, the Department of Education, the Commission on Higher Education, the Public Attorney's Office, local government units, public libraries, and state universities and colleges, shall establish reasonable access mechanisms such as low-bandwidth versions, downloadable legal materials, offline access packets, public access terminals, mobile access points, and barangay or municipal legal information kiosks.

The System may include plain-language guides, frequently asked questions, visual explainers, and translations into Filipino and major Philippine languages. These materials shall be clearly marked as public legal information and shall not be treated as controlling legal interpretations.

SEC. 11. *Verified Corpus Requirement Prior to AI Deployment.* – No AI-assisted legal information service shall be deployed to the public as part of, or officially linked with, the System unless the Council has certified that the verified legal corpus necessary for the intended service has been sufficiently established, authenticated, indexed, and tested.

The certification shall identify the categories of legal materials covered by the AI-assisted service and the limitations of the corpus. Any AI-assisted service shall be technically constrained to retrieve from, cite to, and operate only upon the verified corpus or other official sources approved by the Council.

This section shall not prevent the System from offering ordinary keyword search, metadata search, citation search, or non-AI indexing tools before the deployment of AI-assisted services.

SEC. 12. *AI-Assisted Legal Information Services.* – The State may develop or authorize AI-assisted legal information services as part of the System, provided that such tools are used only to assist public access to legal information and not to replace lawyers, courts, prosecutors, public attorneys, judges, quasi-judicial bodies, or competent legal authorities.

Any AI-assisted legal information service officially integrated into the System shall cite the official source texts relied upon, disclose that it does not provide legal advice, preserve user access to the underlying legal text, and provide referral information to the Public Attorney's Office, legal aid offices, courts, or appropriate government agencies when the query appears to involve an actual legal dispute or urgent rights-based concern.

The Council shall establish minimum safeguards before any AI-assisted legal information service is deployed to the public, including accuracy testing, hallucination-risk testing, source citation requirements, bias assessment, cybersecurity review, human oversight, public feedback mechanisms, and periodic independent audits.

The Council shall immediately suspend, correct, or withdraw any AI-assisted legal information service or public-facing tool that presents a substantial risk of legal misinformation, discrimination, privacy violation, cybersecurity breach, or public harm.

SEC. 13. *Safeguards on Accuracy, Bias, and Public Harm.* – The Council shall establish minimum safeguards before any AI-assisted legal information service is deployed to the public. These safeguards shall include accuracy testing, hallucination-risk testing, source citation requirements, bias assessment, cybersecurity review, human oversight, public feedback mechanisms, and periodic independent audits.

The System shall not collect personal or sensitive personal information from users except when strictly necessary for a lawful and declared public purpose. Anonymous access shall remain available for general legal research. Any processing of personal data shall comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and other applicable laws.

The Council shall immediately suspend, correct, or withdraw any AI-assisted legal information service or public-facing tool that presents a substantial risk of legal misinformation, discrimination, privacy violation, cybersecurity breach, or public harm.

SEC. 14. *Open Standards and Public Use.* – Public legal information made available under this Act shall be provided in open, searchable, interoperable, and machine-readable formats, subject to reasonable safeguards for cybersecurity, system integrity, privacy, and protection against malicious interference.

Official source texts of statutes, rules, regulations, judicial decisions, administrative issuances, and other legal materials of binding legal effect shall not be subject to copyright protection and may be freely accessed, copied, reproduced, distributed, indexed, searched, quoted, linked, transformed into machine-readable formats, and used for public, educational, research, civic, technological, commercial, or non-commercial purposes, subject to the limitations provided by law.

Consistent with Section 176 of the Intellectual Property Code, no copyright shall subsist in any work of the Government of the Philippines and no prior approval or conditions shall be required for the use, for any purpose, of statutes, rules and

regulations, and certain public addresses or materials rendered before courts, administrative agencies, deliberative assemblies, and meetings of public character.

Nothing in this Act shall prevent private publishers, law firms, universities, legal technology developers, or civic organizations from producing annotations, commentaries, digests, analytics, educational tools, citation tools, or other value-added services, provided that they do not falsely represent such materials as official government texts or exclusive sources of law.

SEC. 15. *Protection of Judicial Independence and Congressional Prerogatives.* – The integration of jurisprudence, court rules, and judicial issuances into the System shall be undertaken with due respect for the independence and fiscal autonomy of the Judiciary, and under such arrangements as may be agreed upon with the Supreme Court.

The integration of bills, legislative records, enrolled bills, Republic Acts, and related congressional materials shall be undertaken with due respect for the constitutional powers, internal rules, and records-management authority of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to authorize the Executive Department to determine the meaning of judicial decisions, alter legislative records, or interfere with the internal proceedings of Congress or the Judiciary.

SEC. 16. *Cybersecurity and Authenticity.* – The Department of Information and Communications Technology shall ensure that the System is protected by appropriate cybersecurity, authentication, encryption, backup, disaster recovery, and continuity measures. The System shall include audit trails sufficient to identify when a legal text was uploaded, corrected, updated, archived, or modified, and by whom.

The Council shall establish digital authentication protocols so that users may verify whether a legal text, a consolidated version, or a downloadable document originated from the official System.

SEC. 17. *Good-Faith Reliance, Corrections, and Non-Liability.* – Reference consolidations, summaries, translations, annotations, metadata, search results, and AI-assisted outputs made available through the System are provided as public legal information tools and shall not constitute official legal advice, official legal interpretation, or binding rulings.

No civil, administrative, or criminal liability shall attach to the government, the Council, participating agencies, or their officers and employees for good-faith errors, omissions, delays, or inaccuracies in reference consolidations, summaries, translations, annotations, metadata, search results, or AI-assisted outputs, provided that reasonable standards for authentication, consolidation, review, correction, and public notice have been observed.

This section shall not apply to gross negligence, willful misconduct, bad faith, fraud, corruption, malicious alteration, suppression, or falsification of official source texts or authenticated digital copies.

The Council shall maintain a clear public correction mechanism. Corrections shall be time-stamped, traceable, and accompanied by notice sufficient to inform users of the nature of the correction. This section shall be read together with the rule that official source texts prevail over reference consolidations and other public legal information tools.

SEC. 18. *Prohibited Acts.* – It shall be unlawful for any person to knowingly and without lawful authority alter, delete, corrupt, suppress, replace, disable, or interfere with an official source text, authenticated digital copy, authentication mechanism, audit trail, archive, or core integrity feature of the System in a manner that affects or is reasonably capable of affecting the authenticity, availability, completeness, or integrity of public legal information.

It shall likewise be unlawful for any person to knowingly upload, introduce, certify, or cause the publication in the System of a false, forged, altered, or fabricated legal text as an official source text or authenticated digital copy.

It shall further be unlawful for any person, for profit, public deception, or unlawful advantage, to falsely represent a private database, edited legal text, AI-generated output, unofficial consolidation, or private legal information product as an official source text, authenticated digital copy, or official output of the Philippine Open Law System.

Public officers who knowingly cause the unauthorized alteration, suppression, or falsification of legal information in the System shall be subject to administrative, civil, and criminal liability under applicable laws.

Good-faith citation, republication, commentary, annotation, teaching, research, legal advice, legal representation, criticism, news reporting, civic technology development, or private value-added legal publishing shall not constitute a prohibited

act under this section, provided that the material is not falsely represented as an official source text, authenticated digital copy, or official output of the System.

SEC. 19. *Penalties.* - Any person who commits unauthorized tampering, corruption, suppression, substitution, deletion, disabling, or interference under the first paragraph of the preceding section shall, upon conviction, suffer the penalty of imprisonment of six (6) years and one (1) day to twelve (12) years, and a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱500,000.00) but not more than Two Million Pesos (₱2,000,000.00), when the act affects or is reasonably capable of affecting the authenticity, availability, completeness, or integrity of an official source text, authenticated digital copy, authentication mechanism, audit trail, or archive of the System.

Any person who falsely represents a private database, unofficial consolidation, AI-generated output, edited legal text, or private legal information product as an official source text, authenticated digital copy, or official output of the System shall, upon conviction, suffer the penalty of imprisonment of six (6) months and one (1) day to two (2) years and four (4) months, or a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (₱50,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (₱500,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

If the offender is a public officer who takes advantage of official position, the penalty shall be imposed in its maximum period, with the accessory penalty of disqualification from public office, without prejudice to administrative, civil, and other criminal liability under existing laws.

Where the act is punishable under the Revised Penal Code, the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012, the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, the Data Privacy Act of 2012, or other special laws with a higher penalty, the higher penalty shall apply. Prosecution under this Act shall not bar prosecution for distinct offenses arising from the same act, subject to constitutional protections against double jeopardy.

SEC. 20. *Public Legal Literacy Program.* - The Department of Justice, Public Attorney's Office, Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, Department of the Interior and Local Government, and local government units shall promote public awareness and use of the Philippine Open Law System.

The public legal literacy program shall prioritize workers, farmers, fisherfolk, micro and small entrepreneurs, students, barangay officials, persons deprived of liberty,

overseas Filipino workers and their families, indigenous cultural communities, persons with disabilities, and geographically isolated and disadvantaged communities.

SEC. 21. *Phased Implementation.* - The implementation of this Act shall be undertaken in phases. The first phase shall prioritize the Constitution, Republic Acts, major presidential issuances, and administrative rules and regulations of national application. The second phase shall prioritize jurisprudence, procedural rules, quasi-judicial issuances of public significance, and agency-level regulatory issuances. The third phase shall provide for the integration of local ordinances and other local issuances in coordination with local government units.

The Council shall publish an implementation roadmap within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 22. *Annual Report to Congress.* - The Council shall submit an annual report to Congress on the status of implementation, agencies connected to the System, number of legal texts consolidated, number of users served, access gaps, cybersecurity incidents, AI performance audits if applicable, public feedback, budget utilization, and recommendations for further legislation.

The annual report shall be made publicly available through the System.

SEC. 23. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current appropriations of the Department of Justice, the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and other participating agencies. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

The Council may accept grants, technical assistance, and partnerships from domestic or international institutions, subject to existing laws on procurement, auditing, cybersecurity, data privacy, national security, and conflicts of interest. No grant, partnership, or technical assistance arrangement shall grant any private entity exclusive control over public legal information.

SEC. 24. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within one hundred eighty (180) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Justice and the Department of Information and Communications Technology, in coordination with the members of the Council and relevant institutional partners, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement this Act.

SEC. 25. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 26. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 27. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,