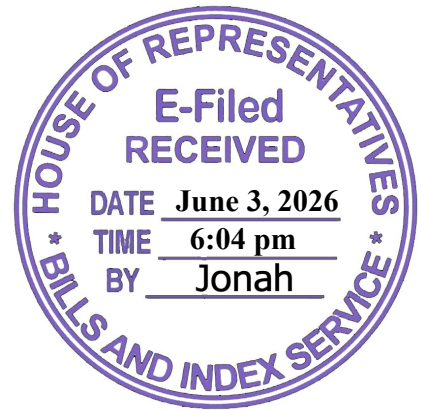


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **9765**



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish clear safeguards on the use of social media by minors to ensure a safe, responsible, and age-appropriate digital environment. While recognizing the growing role of social media in education, communication, and social interaction, the measure also addresses the increasing risks faced by young users, including exposure to harmful content, cyber exploitation, privacy breaches, and excessive screen use that may negatively affect their well-being.

To protect minors, the bill introduces age-based access guidelines, requiring parental or guardian consent for users aged thirteen (13) to seventeen (17), along with access to safer, age-appropriate platform versions with enhanced privacy and limited features. It also mandates social media providers to implement reliable age verification systems, strengthen identity authentication processes, and provide effective parental control and content filtering tools.

Ultimately, this measure upholds the State's duty to safeguard the welfare of children while promoting responsible digital engagement and empowering parents to actively guide their children's online activities in a safer digital space.

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


RICARDO S. CRUZ JR.

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House Bill No. 9765

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING SAFEGUARDS FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY
MINORS, PROMOTING A SAFE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DIGITAL
ENVIRONMENT, AND PROTECTING ADDICTION, AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES

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 "Internet Safety and Protection of Minors Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the youth by safeguarding them from online risks and harmful content and the adverse effects of digital addiction, while ensuring their right to information and communication is respected through the provision of a safe and age-appropriate online environment, in line with the best interests of the child as recognized under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Children and Philippine laws.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – As used in this act:

- (a) Minors refers to person below eighteen (18) years of age or those over but are unable to fully take care of themselves or protect themselves from abuse, neglect, cruelty, exploitation or discrimination because of a physical or mental disability or condition;
- (b) Social media platform refers to any internet-based service, network, application, website, or computer program that is intended to provide an electronic service that satisfies the following conditions:
 - Its sole or primary purpose is to enable online social interaction between two or more end-users;
 - It allows end-users to link to, or interact with, some or all of the other end-users; and
 - It allows end-users to upload or post online content or materials on it.
- (c) Social media platform providers refer to entities that own and operate social media platforms.

- (d) Third-party age verification providers refer to entities that provide age verification systems in social media platforms.

SECTION 4. Use of Social Media Platform and Age Restrictions. – Minors aged thirteen (13) to seventeen (17) may be granted limited access to social media platforms, subject to the following conditions:

- (a) Verified parental or, in the absence of the parents, guardian consent must be secured prior to account activation.
- (b) Social media platforms shall provide age-appropriate versions of their services with enhanced privacy, limited interaction capabilities, and curated content.

Minors below thirteen (13) years old shall be prohibited from registering and using social media accounts, unless for supervised educational purposes as authorized by the Department of Education

SECTION 5. Duties of Social Media Platform Providers. Social media platform providers shall provide reliable age verification measures in their platforms to prevent minors from registering, accessing, or continuing to use their social media service. They shall:

- (a) Adopt reliable means to ensure the age and identity of its users, such as but not limited to ID verification, facial recognition, and other identity authentication systems;
- (b) Provide content filtering tools and/or parental control features to users, and ensure these are accessible, functional, and clearly explained to them;
- (c) Conduct regular audits of user account data to detect and remove age restricted users from the platform; and
- (d) Adopt prompt response mechanisms for reports or findings of minors on the platform.

SECTION 6. Data Privacy. Any personal information collected by social media platforms or third-party age verification providers for the purpose of implementing age verification measures and complying with age restriction requirements shall be subject to the provisions of Republic Act No.10173, otherwise known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012 and all other applicable data protection laws, rules and regulations.

Violation of this provision shall subject the social media platform providers or third-party age verification providers to penalties under the Data Privacy Act and any other administrative, civil, or criminal penalties as may be prescribed by law.

SECTION 7. Anti-Digital Addiction Program. The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Education (DepEd), National Youth Commission (NYC), and other relevant agencies shall launch awareness campaigns and school-based programs to educate the youth and their parents about the signs, risks, and remedies of digital overuse and its links to mental and physical health issues as well as the proper and regulated use of social media.

SECTION 8. 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. In line with this mandate, the DICT shall have the following powers and functions:

- (a) Monitor compliance of social media platforms and third-party age verification service providers with age restrictions, identity verification protocols, and other requirements under this Act;
- (b) Establish reporting mechanisms for violations of this Act;
- (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 in violation of age restrictions;
- (e) Impose penalties in accordance with Section 9 of this Act; and
- (f) Coordinate with relevant government agencies, including the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), National Privacy Commission (NPC), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and DepEd, to ensure consistent, child-sensitive, and effective enforcement of this Act.

SECTION 9. Disabling of Unauthorized Minor Accounts. Social media platform providers shall automatically detect, remove, or deactivate accounts owned or used by minors in violation of this Act.

Upon receiving verified information or a complaint from the public or a government agency, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) may issue a Disabling Order, requiring the platform to disable the identified account within seventy-two (72) hours.

Within three (3) days after the issuance of the Disabling Order, the DICT shall inform the NTC, which shall monitor the social media platform provider's compliance.

SECTION 10. Penalties. Any social media platform provider, or third-party age verification provider that fails to comply with any provision of this Act, including but not limited to the failure to implement adequate age verification systems, refusal to comply with a Disabling Order, or unauthorized retention or misuse of personal data collected under this Act, shall be subject to the following administrative penalties, without prejudice to any civil or criminal liability under existing laws:

- (a) For Social Media Platform providers:
 - A fine of not less than One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000) but not exceeding Twenty Million Pesos (Php 20,000,000) for each act of non-compliance, depending on the gravity and frequency of the violation;
 - A fine of not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 100,000) for each day of continuing violation after due notice;
 - Suspension or revocation of access, operations, or licenses within the Philippines upon a finding of gross negligence, repeated non-compliance, or willful violation, subject to due process.
- (b) For Third-party Age Verification Providers:
 - A fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00) but not more than Five Million Pesos (Php 5,000,000) for breach of data privacy provisions or failure to meet verification standards set under this Act;
 - Permanent disqualification from providing related services to social media platforms operating in the Philippines upon a finding of gross negligence,

repeated non-compliance, or willful misconduct, subject to due process.

The imposition of the above penalties shall be without prejudice to prosecution under the Data Privacy Act of 2012, the Republic Act No. 10175 otherwise known as the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012, or any other applicable penal law.

SECTION 11. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DICT, in consultation with the NTC, NPC, DSWD, and DepEd and other relevant stakeholders shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 12. Separability Clause. If any portion or provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 13. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SECTION 14. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

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

Approved,