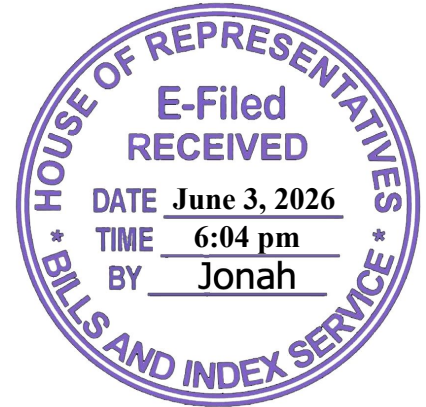


TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL No. 9775



INTRODUCED BY HON. RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The way Filipinos consume information has completely changed. While the rise of social media and digital platforms has made it easier to connect, it has also opened the floodgates for misinformation, fake news, and deliberate online manipulation. In the Philippines, where digital media consumption is among the highest in the world, our citizens -- especially the youth -- are constantly exposed to distorted narratives that weaken public trust and cloud public discourse.

In this environment, simply knowing how to navigate the internet is no longer enough. Digital literacy must go beyond operating a smartphone; our students need the critical thinking skills to analyze, verify, and question the information on their screens before they hit "share."

While the Department of Education currently includes Media and Information Literacy (MIL) in the Senior High School curriculum, a single subject late in a student's academic life is no longer sufficient to counter the scale of modern digital threats. We need a more comprehensive and systemic approach that starts earlier and runs deeper.

This bill seeks to institutionalize and enhance the integration of critical media and information literacy across the Philippine educational system. It aims to update our curriculum to match evolving technology, provide educators with specialized training and resources, and fund community-level programs to reach the non-formal education sector.

Protecting our information ecosystem is a matter of national resilience and civic empowerment. By equipping the next generation with the tools to discern fact from fiction, we foster a society grounded in truth, accountability, and critical thinking. In view of the urgent need to secure our digital space and protect our youth, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE)
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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
HOUSE BILL No. 9775

INTRODUCED BY HON. RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.

AN ACT
PROMOTING CRITICAL MEDIA AND INFORMATION LITERACY IN THE
PHILIPPINES AND PRESCRIBING ITS ENHANCED INCLUSION IN THE
EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM IN THE PHILIPPINES, FOR
SUCH OTHER PURPOSES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS 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 "*Critical Media Literacy Act of 2026.*"

TITLE I
DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND POLICIES

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is hereby declared the policy of the State to integrate the development of critical media literacy among Filipinos at an early age (1) to develop an understanding of media, whether mainstream or alternative, and its importance in sharing opinion, and (2) to create an environment conducive for critical thinking by raising awareness on how to combat false and misleading information being circulated in different forms of media.

TITLE II
DEFINITION OF TERMS

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms.

a) *Alternative Media* refers to media contents (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.) contents that fall outside the mainstream or dominant contents. Alternative media contents are progressive, critical, and pro-people. They are usually produced and distributed independently.

b) *Basic Education* encompasses kindergarten, elementary, and secondary education, as well as alternative learning systems for out-of-school learners and those with special needs.¹

c) *Critical Media Literacy* is an educational response that expands the notion of literacy to include different forms of mass communication, popular culture, and new technologies. It deepens the potential of literacy education to critically analyze relationships between media and audiences, information, and power. Along with this mainstream analysis, alternative media production empowers students to create their own messages that can challenge media texts and narratives.²

d) *Literacy* involves gaining the skills and knowledge to read, interpret, produce texts and artifacts, and to gain the intellectual tools and capacities to fully participate in one's culture and society.

e) *Media Literacy* provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of media forms (print, broadcast, film, radio, etc.)- from print to video to the Internet.

Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

¹ Section 3, Republic Act No. 10533

² Douglas Kellner and Jeff Share:

Media literacy, therefore, is about helping students become competent, critical, and literate in all media forms so that they control the interpretation of what they see or hear rather than letting the interpretation control them. To become media literate is not to memorize facts or statistics about the media, but rather to learn to raise the right questions about what you are watching, reading, or listening to.

TITLE IV

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR MEDIA LITERACY

SECTION 4. National Commission for Media Literacy. -- A National Commission for Media Literacy (NCML) shall be established immediately after the effectivity of this law, composed of the following:

- a) Secretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT);
- b) Secretary of the Department of Education (DepEd);
- c) Commission of the Commission on Higher Education (CHED);
- d) A maximum of five (5) representatives from different organizations that advocate for critical media literacy;
- e) A maximum of three (3) representatives from different mainstream broadcasting networks; and
- f) A maximum of three (3) representatives from different alternative media networks.

SECTION 5. Functions and Responsibilities of the NCMLP. -- The NCML shall have the following functions and responsibilities:

1. To provide for trainings and programs that shall help develop and enhance the skills and knowledge of instructors, teachers, and professors who teach critical media literacy and information among the students;

2. To conduct a thorough review of existing curricula about critical media literacy and information courses and to draft a standardized curriculum for all schools and universities, following the principles and guidelines set therefor;
3. To hold consultations with the public in order to further enhance its programs, curriculum, and projects for a better understanding of critical media literacy and information for all Filipinos.

TITLE III

SCOPE OF MEDIA LITERACY EDUCATION

SECTION 6. Responsible Agencies. -- The following government departments, agencies, instrumentalities, and non-government organizations shall be responsible for promoting critical media information and literacy among all Filipinos:

- a) Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)
- b) Department of Education
- c) Commission on Higher Education

SECTION 7. Scope. -- All Filipinos starting from grade level one shall receive critical media literacy education, the curriculum being adjusted based on child development and his/her capacity to understand.

TITLE IV

PRIORITY PROGRAMS AND POLICIES

SECTION 8. Curriculum Development and Review. -- All existing curricula that already include critical media literacy shall be reviewed and amended.

All schools, universities, and colleges that do not have a curriculum on critical media literacy and information shall develop one.

In both cases of curriculum development and review, the following principles shall be adhered to:

1. Media is a COMPETENT TOOL. Media is a competent tool, not only in gathering information, but also as a tool for critical analysis of various social issues. (shapes opinion)
2. Media is EVOLVING (technology)
3. Media takes DIFFERENT FORMS. (alternative and mainstream)
4. Media can be CONTROLLED (hegemony)

SECTION 9. Curriculum Committee. -- The Department of Education (DepEd) and the 49 50 51 Commission on Higher Education (CHED), in partnership with (1) non-government organizations that advocate for critical media literacy and information, (2) mainstream and alternative media outlets, and (3) nationwide alliances of student councils and publications, shall ensure that all schools in the Philippines shall have an effective curriculum on critical media literacy and information.

SECTION 10. Curriculum Implementation. -- The Curriculum Committee should be able to develop, revise, or improve the curriculum on critical media literacy and information within six (6) months after the effectivity of the law.

SECTION 11. Capacity-building and Training. -- The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in partnership with DepEd and CHED, and (1) non-government organizations that advocate for critical media literacy and information, (2) mainstream and alternative media outlets, (3) nationwide alliances of student councils and publications, and (4) nationwide alliances of teachers or professors and their unions, shall create appropriate programs for teachers, professors, or instructors who teach critical media literacy and information at all levels.

TITLE V
MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

SECTION 12. Rules and Regulations. - The Department of Budget and Management shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 13. Appropriations. - The amounts necessary to carry out the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriation of the agencies. Thereafter, the amounts necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 14. Separability Clause. - If for any reason any section or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 15. Repealing Clause. - Any laws, decrees, or laws, decrees, or rules and regulations which are inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are hereby 34 amended or repealed.

SECTION 16. Effectivity. - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,