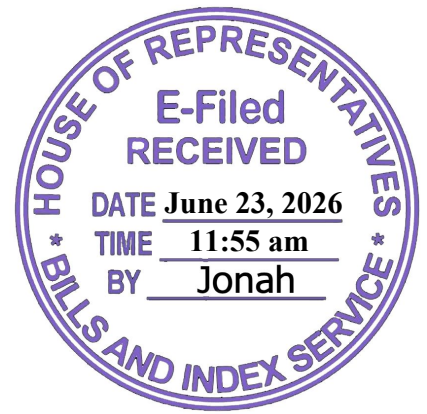


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 9926



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to establish safeguards governing the use of social media by minors and aims to promote a safe and age-appropriate digital environment and to protect children from the harmful effects of online exposure and digital addiction.

The increasing use of social media among children and adolescents has expanded opportunities for learning and access to information. At the same time, unrestricted access to digital platforms has exposed minors to online exploitation, harmful content, cyberbullying and excessive screen time that may adversely affect their mental development and holistic well-being.

Despite existing laws protecting children from abuse and exploitation, no comprehensive framework currently exists to regulate minors' access to social media or to recommend obligations for digital platform providers. The absence of clear standards has limited the ability of parents, schools, and government agencies to address the risks associated with unsupervised online activity.

This proposed measure establishes age-based access restrictions for social media platforms. Minors aged thirteen (13) to seventeen (17) may access social media only upon verified parental or guardian consent, and through age-appropriate services with enhanced privacy protections. Children below the age of thirteen (13) years old shall generally be prohibited from maintaining social media accounts, except for educational purposes.

The enactment of this vital piece of legislation strengthens the protection of minors in digital spaces and promotes responsible social media use while preserving the ability of young people to access information and communicate in an appropriate and safe online environment.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly sought.


HON. ERIC G. YAP

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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House Bill No. **9926**

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT
ESTABLISHING SAFEGUARDS FOR THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY
MINORS, PROMOTING A SAFE AND AGE APPROPRIATE DIGITAL
ENVIRONMENT, AND PROTECTING MINORS FROM DIGITAL 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*”.

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby the declared 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.

SEC. 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:

i. Its sole or primary purpose is to enable online social interaction between two or more end-users;

ii. It allows end-users to link to, or interact with, some or all of the other end-users; and

iii. 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; and

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

SEC. 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; and

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 (DepEd).

SEC. 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.

SEC. 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 (RA) 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 RA No. 10173, and any other administrative, civil, or criminal penalties as may be prescribed by law.

SEC. 7. *Anti-Digital Addiction Program.* — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), 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.

SEC. 8. *Role of the Department of Information and Communications Technology.* — The Department of Information and Communications Technology 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.

SEC. 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 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.

SEC. 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:

i. 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;

ii. A fine of not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 100,000) for each day of continuing violation after due notice; and

iii. 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:

i. 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; and

ii. 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 RA No. 10173, otherwise known as the "*Data Privacy Act of 2012*"; RA No. 10175, otherwise known as the "*Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012*"; or any other applicable penal laws.

SEC. 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.

SEC. 18. *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.

SEC. 19. *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.

SEC. 20. *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,