

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



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

HOUSE BILL NO. 9967

Introduced by Rep. CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.

AN ACT

PROHIBITING CHILDREN BELOW FIFTEEN (15) YEARS OF AGE FROM CREATING, MAINTAINING, OR USING SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, REQUIRING SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS TO IMPLEMENT PRIVACY-PRESERVING AGE-ASSURANCE AND CHILD-SAFETY MEASURES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The internet nowadays is swarmed with children accessing and using different social media platforms with contents that are inappropriate for their age. Unsupervised exposure to social media platforms makes them vulnerable to risks of cyberbullying, anxiety, online sexual abuse, online exploitation, depression and sleep disruption during a period when their minds are impressionable.

The rate by which online connectivity endangers the youth is already alarming. In fact, in the 2026 Global Safety Survey conducted by Microsoft, it was noted that teen's exposure to risks rose again, with hate speech (35%), scams (29%), and cyberbullying (23%) among the most commonly experienced harm.¹

In 2021 alone, two (2) million children in the Philippines were subjected to online sexual abuse and exploitation.² They were reported to have experienced grooming, harassment and blackmail.

This proposed measure is anchored on the State policy to protect children and to strengthen safeguards against online harms, consistent with existing child protection frameworks and the State's continuing efforts to address online sexual abuse or exploitation of children and child sexual abuse or exploitation materials. This measure is intended to complement, and not diminish, duties and responsibilities already imposed on internet intermediaries and related entities under

¹ "Building a safer digital future, together." Available at <https://blogs.microsoft.com/on-the-issues/2026/02/09/building-a-safer-digital-future-together/>

² Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation of Children in the Philippines". Available at <https://www.unicef.org/philippines/online-sexual-abuse-and-exploitation-children-philippines>

Republic Act No. 11930 otherwise known as Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The children have reportedly posted photos of themselves holding guns in their social media accounts, something which is rather disturbing considering that such weapons are dangerous when indiscriminately used by children their age. This behavior may also be an indication of the level of maturity of these children and whether they appreciate that such posts may have lasting impact on their personal lives and how others would perceive them later.

Hence, this proposed legislation aims to safeguard children from behavioral desensitization and triggering as a result of prolonged exposure to electronic media violence. It intends to promote a clear and responsible usage of digital technology preferably for learning purposes, and aid in the formation of positive values among the youth.

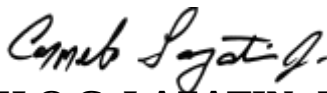
This proposed measure prompts parents to take a more active involvement in their children's growth, to be present to guide them in choosing healthier and more proactive alternatives to learning other than relying on content and information found online.

The bill proposes the following policies:

- a) Prohibit children below fifteen (15) years old from creating, registering, maintaining, accessing, logging into or using social medial accounts, including the use of account-based features such as posting, sharing, reacting, commenting, messaging, live streaming, and joining groups or communities, as these expose them to higher risks of exploitation and abuse;
- b) Require social media platforms operating in the country to establish age-verification mechanisms and submit annual transparency reports on observed and removed underage accounts;
- c) Establish accessible reporting and request mechanisms that allow parents or legal guardians or where appropriate, schools through authorized reporting channels) to request the restriction, deactivation, or removal of accounts suspected or verified to belong to children below the allowable age threshold;
- d) Enable schools and educational institutions to utilize a secure, supervised educational platforms for educational purposes only;

While social media platforms offer a wider range of information and allow interaction with different types of individuals, the burden of making these digital systems safer for children still rests on the government, parents, schools and software companies. Let us protect our children's wellbeing for as long as we could, and until they have developed faculties to safeguard themselves from possible harm and influences that they could ever encounter while interacting online.

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


CARMELO G. LAZATIN, JR.



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

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

1 *Section 1. Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Children’s Online Protection and
2 Social Media Safety Regulation Act.”

3
4 *Section 2. Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby the policy of the State to protect and
5 promote the physical, social, and mental well-being of children. With the dawn of digital
6 technology, the State shall pursue measures that minimize the adverse impacts of unsupervised
7 and prolonged exposure of children to unsuitable or harmful online content and interactions
8 commonly facilitated through social media platforms.

9
10 The State shall promote a safer digital environment that fosters learning and positive values
11 formation by establishing an age threshold for social media account use and by requiring platforms
12 to implement child-safety measures.

13
14 Implementation of this Act shall be guided by sufficiently clear standards to avoid
15 vagueness and over breadth in enforcement, mindful of the chilling effect that vague or overly
16 broad cyber regulations may create on protected expression and privacy.

1 This Act shall be implemented consistently with Republic Act No. 11930 otherwise known
2 as Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child Sexual Abuse
3 or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act and its IRR, including the principle that nothing in the
4 applicable duties of covered entities may be construed to require monitoring of any user or the
5 content of any communication.

6
7 The State likewise recognizes the need to implement age-assurance and child safety
8 measures in a manner that upholds data privacy and security standards under Republic Act No.
9 10173, otherwise known as the “Data Privacy Act of 2012”.

10
11 *Section 3. Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

- 12
13 a. Child – refers to any person who is below fifteen (15) years old.
14
15 b. Social Media Platform – refers to any online service or application primarily designed
16 to enable users to create an account, maintain a user profile, and engage in social
17 interaction or community participation, including posting, sharing, reacting,
18 commenting, messaging, live streaming, joining groups/communities.

19
20 For contextual guidance only, “Social Media Platform” includes services generally
21 described as “participative network platform providers”, including a social media
22 intermediary, as described in the IRR of R.A No. 11930

23
24 For purposes of clarity, “Social Media Platform” excludes: (i) school-owned or school-
25 managed learning management systems and educational platforms used solely for
26 instruction and school administration; and (ii) government digital service portals for
27 essential transactions, as may be further specified in the IRR using objective criteria.
28 This exclusion is solely for definitional clarity and shall not be construed as creating a
29 right of access by a Child to any service, which shall remain subject to applicable laws
30 and regulations.

- 31
32 c. Age Threshold – refers to the boundary to grant access, impose restriction, or trigger
33 a change in status of those who can access social media platforms.
34
35 d. Age-Assurance / Age -Verification System – is a mechanism to validate the age or age-
36 range of social media users through secure and reliable means.

37
38 Age-assurance/verification system under this Act shall not require identity verification.
39 Nothing herein shall be construed as an exemption from applicable data privacy
40 requirements, consistent with R.A No. 11930 and R.A No. 10173.

- e. Underage Account – refers to any account determined, through the platform’s age-verification system or other reliable means, to be used or controlled by a Child under this Act.
- f. Verified Underage Report – refers to a report submitted through a platform’s reporting mechanism by a parent, legal guardian, school administrator, or other authorized reporter under the IRR, supported by information sufficient to trigger a reasonable age-assurance challenge or restriction process without requiring disclosure of message contents.

Section 4. Prohibition on Access and Use of Social Media Platforms by Children. – No Social Media Platform shall permit a Child below fifteen (15) years of age to create, register, maintain, access, log into, or use an account on the platform.

Accordingly, a Child below fifteen (15) years of age shall not be permitted to:

- a. Creating or registering an account on any Social Media Platform;
- b. Access, log into, or use any Social Media Platform account, whether owned by the child or provided by another person;
- c. Use any feature of a Social Media Platform that requires account login, including posting, sharing, reacting, commenting, communicating, direct messaging, live streaming, joining groups/communities, or otherwise engaging with other users through the platform.

Nothing in this Act shall be construed to penalize a Child below fifteen (15) years of age for merely viewing, reading, or watching publicly available online content that does not require account login, subject to other applicable laws and platform policies. In such instances of public viewing, parents and guardians shall exercise reasonable supervision. Children may use school-owned or school-managed educational platforms that are not Social Media Platforms as defined in this Act and its IRR. Enforcement shall be directed at platform compliance and adult supervision mechanisms, consistent with child-protection approaches and the “no monitoring” principle under Republic Act No. 11930 and its IRR.

Section 5. Responsibilities of Social Media Platforms. – All Social Media Platforms operating, accessible or offering services in the Philippines shall:

- a. Adopt and implement age-assurance / age-verification controls and protocols, including privacy-preserving age assurance or anonymous approaches, consistent with the policy study and rules to be undertaken and promulgated by the Department of

1 Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and the National
2 Telecommunications Commission (NTC) guided by R.A No. 11930 and its IRR.

- 3
4 b. Promptly deactivate, remove, or restrict access to accounts determined or verified to
5 belong to children below fifteen (15) years of age;

6
7 Provided, That platforms shall implement a clear notice and correction mechanism for
8 users who may have been restricted due to age-verification errors, including a
9 reasonable process and period for correction and restoration where age is verified;

10
11 Provided further, That the notice process may be delayed or dispensed with when
12 necessary to avoid compromising child protection or an ongoing investigation,
13 consistent with protective approaches imposed on intermediaries under existing child-
14 protection rule.

- 15
16 c. Feature a user-friendly, visible and accessible reporting mechanism that allows parents,
17 guardians, or schools to report and request the deactivation of accounts belonging to a
18 child below the allowable age threshold;

- 19
20 d. Ensure full compliance to all applicable Philippine laws on data privacy, cybercrime
21 prevention, child protection and online safety;

22
23 Compliance under this Act shall be without prejudice to duties and obligations imposed
24 under Anti-Online Sexual Abuse or Exploitation of Children (OSAEC) and Anti-Child
25 Sexual Abuse or Exploitation Materials (CSAEM) Act and its IRR, including the
26 continuing development and installation of protective mechanisms and measures to
27 prevent, detect, respond to, or report violations involving children.

- 28
29 e. Submit annual compliance and transparency reports to the DICT including the
30 following:

- 31
32 (i) Implementation of age-verification systems;
33 (ii) Number of accounts deactivated, removed or reported to belong to underage
34 users;
35 (iii) Digital safety systems modifications; and
36 (iv) Violations involving minors.

37
38 The DICT may require additional standardized reporting fields, consistent with data
39 privacy and security requirements under the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

40 *Section 6. Responsibilities of the Department of Information and Communications*
41 *Technology (DICT).* – The DICT shall be the lead implementing agency and shall:

- a. Be responsible in enforcing the provisions of this Act in all social media platforms operating in the Philippines;
- b. Ensure compliance of Social Media Platforms with the required age-assurance / verification system, child safety system, and reporting mechanisms through periodic compliance assessments based on objective indicators set by the IRR.
- c. Establish a feedback mechanism for complaints or violations related to underage accounts;
- d. Recommend administrative sanctions for non-compliance, subject to due process under this Act and the IRR. The DICT shall promulgate clear standards for what constitutes “reasonable compliance” to avoid arbitrary enforcement.

In implementing this Act, the DICT shall coordinate with the National Telecommunications Commission and National Privacy Commission (NPC) on privacy and data security compliance under Republic Act No. 10173. The DICT shall likewise coordinate with the relevant agencies involved in online child protection mechanisms under Republic Act No. 11930 and its IRR, as may be necessary.

Section 7. Responsibilities of the Department of Education (DepEd). – The Department of Education shall:

- a. Facilitate the integration of responsible digital use, digital literacy and evaluation of online contents into basic education curriculum;
- b. Conduct trainings for teachers, parents and school administration on safety online behavior, how to detect red-flags on social media contents, and positive digital behavior;
- c. Issue guidelines to schools on the use of digital platforms to ensure creation and sharing/ posting of educational and harmless contents; and
- d. Monitor schools’ compliance to provisions of this Act.

Section 8. Responsibilities of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The DSWD shall be responsible in:

- a. Provide counselling services and intervention to families and children who were negatively affected by excessive digital use;
- b. Provide assistance to victims of online sexual exploitation and abuse, cyber bullying, and dangers relevant to online connectivity;
- c. Promote community-based digital safety programs in partnership with local government units;
- d. Create educational contents in coordination with the DepEd and ensuring that such materials are exhibited in communities through the conduct of outreach programs;

The DSWD shall ensure that its programs and any data collection systems implemented under this Act comply with the Data Privacy Act of 2012.

1 *Section 9. Responsibilities of National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) and*
2 *National Commission on Muslim Filipinos (NCMF).* – The NCIP and the NCMF shall:

- 3 a. Be responsible in providing guidelines for the creation of culturally sensitive and
4 appropriate contents mirroring cultural traditions, norms and local conditions.
- 5 b. Recommend strategies aligned to address online risks and protect vulnerable children
6 in their communities.

7 Such guidelines and recommendations shall be coordinated with the DICT, DepEd, and
8 DSWD, and shall be consistent with data privacy and child protection laws.

9 *Section 10. Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians.* – Parents and guardians shall be
10 responsible in supervising and monitoring their children/ wards to ensure that they do not access,
11 log into, or use social media platforms which is a violation of the provisions of this Act.

12
13 They shall have the right or authority to request restriction, for the deactivation and removal
14 of accounts suspected or confirmed to belong to children below fifteen (15) years of age.

15
16 *Section 11. Administrative Enforcement and Penalties.* –

- 17
18 a. *Administrative Due Process.* The DICT shall establish, through the IRR, a clear
19 administrative enforcement procedure, including notice, opportunity to be heard,
20 decision standards, and appeal mechanisms. Enforcement actions shall be guided
21 by clear, objective standards to address concerns on vagueness, overbreadth, and
22 chilling effect in cyber regulation.
- 23
24 b. *Social Media Platforms.* Any Social Media Platform that fails to comply with the
25 requirement of this Act, especially the implementation of age-verification system
26 and submission of annual reports shall be liable for the following:
27
28 i. First Offense: Fine of P500,000.00 to P1,000,000.00;
29 ii. Second Offense: Fine of 1,000,000.00 to P3,000,000.00;
30 iii. Third Offense: Fine of P3,000,000 to 5,000,000.00 and possible suspension or
31 restriction of operations within the Philippines, subject to notice and hearing,
32 upon recommendation of the DICT and as may be ordered by the proper
33 regulatory authority or the courts pursuant to the IRR.

34
35 The foregoing penalties are without prejudice to liabilities and penalties under other
36 applicable laws, including Republic Act No. 11930 and its IRR.

- 37
38 c. *Parents and Guardians.* Parents and guardians shall not be held criminally liable
39 for repeated violations of their children or ward of the provisions of this Act.
40 However, they shall be recommended to attend the mandatory seminar on digital

1 safety, counselling sessions and family intervention programs by the DSWD or
2 LGUs.

- 3
4 d. *Schools or Educational Institutions.* Schools that allow the unsanctioned use of
5 Social Media Platforms by their students during school hours may be subject to
6 administrative sanctions, corrective measures, or compliance directives under
7 DepEd regulations.
8

9 *Section 12. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from the
10 effectivity of this Act, the DepEd, DICT, DSWD, NCME, NCIP, the NPC and Local Government
11 Units in coordination with relevant agencies and stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing
12 rules and regulations to effectively carry out the provisions of this Act.
13

14 The IRR shall include minimum standards on: (i) privacy-preserving age-verification or
15 age-assurance; (ii) reporting and correction mechanisms for age-verification errors; (iii) timelines
16 for action on verified underage reports; and (iv) objective criteria for assessing reasonable
17 compliance by platforms, all consistent with relevant mechanisms under Republic Act No. 11930
18 and its IRR, and NTC rules, regulations and protocols.
19

20 *Section 13. Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional
21 or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.
22

23 *Section 14. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations, or parts
24 therefor, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified
25 accordingly.
26

27 *Section 15. Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
28 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
29

30 Approved,