

Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS  
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 7907



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**INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS**

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**AN ACT  
INCORPORATING THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBLE, FAIR  
USAGE AND ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CAMPUSES  
NATIONWIDE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In 2018, the number of internet users around the world reached four billion or over half of the world's total population.<sup>1</sup> 67 million Filipinos or 63% of an estimated population of 105.7 million are internet users and active social media users.<sup>2</sup> For the third year in a row, the Philippines tops the list in global social media usage with 3 hours and 57 minutes average time daily spent using social media in any device.<sup>3</sup> 58% of Filipinos online use the internet every day for personal use.<sup>4</sup>

A 2016 study conducted particularly on the youth online showed that Filipino children, some as young as nine years old, can freely access the internet through free wifi connections at home and in school or in cybercafes.<sup>5</sup> Some children encountered exploitative strangers who befriended them online and persistently tried to chat with them. Others experience bullying online through hurtful comments or posts on social networking sites. Other online risks include health, family, and academic problems due to excessive internet use; identity theft, and receiving morbid posts.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, while the internet is seen as a repository of knowledge, social media has become an alarming source of fake news and misleading information. As such, it becomes essential for children and teenagers to be able to distinguish a reliable source from an unreliable one.<sup>7</sup> They

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<sup>1</sup> Simon Kemp, "2018 Digital Yearbook," *wearesocial*, January 30, 2018, <https://wearesocial.com/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> "Global Kids Online: The Philippines – Executive Summary," *Global Kids Online*. November 2016, [http://globalkidsonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Executive-summary\\_28-Oct-2016.pdf](http://globalkidsonline.net/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Executive-summary_28-Oct-2016.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.


<sup>7</sup> Ainslie MacLellan, "How kids and teens navigate social media in the era of fake news," *CBC News*, March 24, 2018, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/mcgill-fake-news-1.4591529>

must be educated not just how to effectively use social media for information but also in tracking down the source, researching the author and the news organization, checking with other sources, and fact-checking.<sup>8</sup>

It is an express state policy to address these concerns. Under Section 17, Article II of the 1987 Constitution, the State is mandated to prioritize, among others, education and science and technology to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development. Section 13 of the same recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and the State's duty to promote their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being as well as to inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.

This bill thus seeks to educate our children on how to effectively use social media in communications and dissemination of information. It aims to help pupils and students utilize social media in public discourse and opinion for a more participative democracy. Moreover, a goal herein is also to develop discernment and critical-thinking in the responsible use of current and future technologies.

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



**ALFRED VARGAS**

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<sup>8</sup> "Do tweens and teens believe "fake news?" *Common Sense Media*, <https://www.common sense media.org/news-and-media-literacy/do-tweens-and-teens-believe-fake-news>

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**NATIONWIDE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1. *Title.*** — This Act shall be known as the "Social Media Awareness in Campuses Nationwide Act of 2018".

**SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** — The State has constitutionally-declared policies to serve and protect the people, to give priority to education to foster patriotism and nationalism and to recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-building. Towards this end, it is the objective of this Act to cope up with the mercurial rise of the influence and prevalence of use of Social Media by inculcating onto the youth and/or students the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in their unavoidable daily immersion in Social Media.

**SECTION 3. *Inclusion of Social Media in the Curricula for Primary and Secondary Education.*** — Social Media awareness shall be part of the curriculum for both primary and secondary education, in public and private schools, with the following objectives:

- (a) To inculcate how various types of Social Media aid in the effective and efficient dissemination of information;
- (b) To inculcate how Social Media helps in shaping public discourse and opinion;
- (c) To inculcate how Social Media helps in fostering a more participative democracy;
- (d) To inculcate the importance of upholding truth and the veracity of facts, figures and events in Social Media;
- (e) To inculcate responsible and fair use of Social Media; and
- (f) To inculcate the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in the use and/or enjoyment of Social Media.

The Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.

**SECTION 4. *Social Media Awareness as part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP).*** – Social Media awareness must be made part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP), particularly in the service components pertaining to the Literacy Training Service (LTS) and the Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in consultation with the DICT, shall immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.

**SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The DepEd, CHED, TESDA, in consultation with the DICT, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of the provisions of this Act: Provided, That the failure of the concerned agencies to promulgate the said rules and regulations shall not prevent the implementation of this Act upon its effectivity.

**SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.*** – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 7. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

*Approved,*