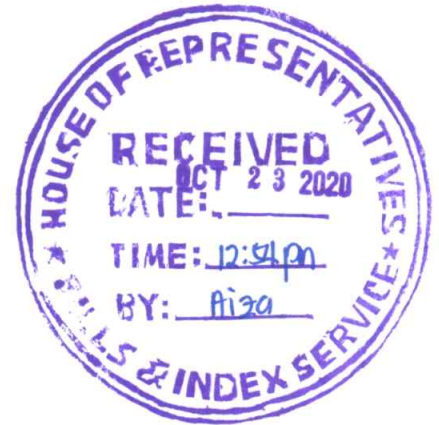


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session



HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1313

Introduced by

ARLENE D. BROSAS (Gabriela Women's Party), CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE, FERDINAND R. GAITE, EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT (Bayan Muna), FRANCE L. CASTRO (ACT Teachers Partylist) and SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Kabataan Partylist)

A RESOLUTION URGING THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON THE WELFARE OF CHILDREN TO INVESTIGATE, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, THE ALARMING SPIKE OF THE NUMBER OF CASES OF ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN DURING PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, International Justice Mission defines Online Sexual Exploitation of Children or OSEC as, "the production, for the purpose of online publication or transmission, of visual depictions (e.g. photos, videos, live streaming) of the sexual abuse or exploitation of a minor for a third party who is not in the physical presence of the victim, in exchange for compensation";

WHEREAS, based on the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), violence against children is all forms of physical or mental violence, injury and abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse;

WHEREAS, OSEC is a form of violence against children using cyberspace. It is among the forms of abuses against children that continues to increase drastically;

WHEREAS, from 2017 to 2019, Philippines was considered as global hotspot for online children's abuse and top global source of child sex abuse materials. According to IJM, 237 referral cases from foreign law enforcement agencies were received by the Philippines, from 2010 to 2017, which is more than eight times referrals than other country;

WHEREAS, an increase of 250% from 23,333 in 2014 to 81,723 in 2017 on internet protocol (IP) addresses for internet-based child sexual exploitation in the Philippines was found on the study of International Justice Mission;

WHEREAS, 80% or 8 out of 10 children in the Philippines are most likely to be victims of online sexual abuse, as reported by UNICEF;

WHEREAS, the median age of the victims was 11 years old while 3% of the victims were three years old and younger. The youngest victim in the Philippines was a two-month-old child;

WHEREAS, the length of abuse suffered by children ranges from two months to four years. Two years is the average length of abuse;

WHEREAS, because of widespread poverty, parents and immediate family members, are forced to participate in this kind of act in order to survive. They are regarded as primary traffickers. On the 217 victims where traffickers were able to identify, 41% of the perpetrators are biological parents and 42% are relatives. Hence, OSEC is usually considered as a family-based crime;

WHEREAS, 381 victims, with the average age of 11 years old and with less than 1-year-old being the youngest, were involved in 90 OSEC cases from 2011 to 2017;

WHEREAS, in 2018, at least 600,000 naked and sexualized photos and videos of Filipino children circulated and sold online, but only 27 perpetrators were convicted. On the same year, reported cases reached more than 60,000. Only 100 offenders were captured between 2011 to 2017 and only 20 suspects were convicted. This is a clear reflection of Philippines' weak investigation on OSEC;

WHEREAS, since the imposition of lockdown in the Philippines due to pandemic, that resulted to massive loss of jobs, extreme poverty and crisis, a threefold increase on the number of OSEC cases has been recorded. From March to May 2020, a total of 279,166 cyber tips were received by the DOJ Office of Cybercrime (OOC). This is a 264.63% increase compared to 76,561 documented cyber tips on the same period last 2019;

WHEREAS, because of the quarantine, victims were forced to stay indoors with their parents or relatives who are their main traffickers that made the detection of cases more difficult;

WHEREAS, victims endure assault, rape, torture, beating and even death. OSEC may cause depression, social isolation and withdrawal, feelings of anger and worthlessness, trauma, difficulty to form health relationships, difficulty to lead a meaningful adult life, suicide attempts and death;

WHEREAS, cases of online sexual exploitation of children in the Philippines are undetected and underreported. Thus, documented cases of OSEC is far from the devastating reality of online abuse;

WHEREAS, it is the duty of the state to uphold children's rights and to protect it from any kind of abuse and exploitation. Therefore, stronger actions to battle the alarming upsurge of OSEC cases must be taken;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the House Committee on the Welfare of Children investigate, in aid of legislation, the alarming spike of the number of cases of online sexual exploitation of children during pandemic

Adopted,


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