

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF THE PHILIPPINES  
*Second Regular Session*

SENATE  
S. B. 1679

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SENATE  
OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Introduced by Senator Poe

'18 FEB -6 P 3:53

AN ACT  
INCORPORATING THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBLE, FAIR AND TRUTHFUL  
USAGE AND ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS AND  
UNIVERSITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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*Explanatory Note*

In the early part of 2017, a report entitled, “Digital in 2017: Global Overview”, stated that “more than half of the world’s population now uses the internet” and that the findings in said report “have exciting implications for businesses, governments, and society in general”.

One of the focuses of the Digital in 2017 report was the **growth of social media** which was based on changes in active social media users in countries. In terms of the number of growth in number of social media users compared to the numbers in 2016, the Philippines ranked seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) worldwide with a whopping twelve million (12,000,000) new social media users, a twenty five (25%) increase from its numbers in 2016.

Based on the Digital in 2017 report, the Philippines ranked sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) worldwide in terms of countries with the **largest number of active Facebook users** at sixty million users (60,000,000).

Lastly on the Digital in 2017 report, it bears noting that the Philippines topped the ranking of countries in terms of “**time spent on social media**” as Filipinos were seen to have been spending an average of 4 hours and 17 minutes per day on social media sites such as Facebook, Snapchat and Twitter.

The internet penetration in the Philippines, as well as the above-mentioned numbers, will surely continue to rise in the next years to come thereby truly making the worldwide web and/or social media a bigger, accessible and influential forum/marketplace of ideas leading to a more participative citizenry and/or democracy. Simply put, the influence of Social Media and the continuous increase of its users/subscribers are unavoidable.

Given the above phenomenon/trend, the “prime duty” of the Government “**to serve and protect the people**” (Section 4, Article 2 of the Constitution) must also cope up. The Constitution’s mandate that Government shall **give priority to education, among others, to foster patriotism and nationalism**, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development (Section 17, Article 2) must also consider the rise of Social Media as the State also ought to recognize the **vital role of communication and information in nation-building** (Section 24, Article 2).

In keeping with the above-enumerated constitutionally-enshrined duties of the State, this legislative measure seeks the inclusion of the importance of Social Media, how it effectively and efficiently disseminates information and shapes public discourse and issues, into the curriculum of primary and secondary levels of education in the country.

Moreover, as the State ought to maintain its respect for the freedom of speech expression and should never censor or silence the people, this Bill, instead, seeks to inculcate in our students and/or the youth the virtues of discernment and critical thinking in the face of the emergence of what has been labeled as “fake news”. This Bill seeks to insulate the citizenry from attempts to unscrupulously utilize social media for various kinds of black propaganda and misinformation which are detrimental to transparency, accountability and truthfulness which could frustrate a meaningful, fruitful and intelligent discourse towards nation-building.

Aside from the inclusion of Social Media in the curriculum of primary and secondary education, this Bill has the following highlights:

1. Corporations shall be mandated to promote responsible usage of Social Media as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and ensure that the same shall likewise be observed and practiced by their officials and employees; and
2. Social Media education and/or mentorship shall be made part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP).

In view of the foregoing, this legislative measure’s immediate enactment into a law is hereby earnestly sought.

  
GRACE POE

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

1           **SECTION 1.** *Title* – This Act shall be known as the “Social Media Awareness in  
2 Schools and Universities Act of 2018”.  
3

4           **SECTION 2.** *Declaration of Policy* – The State has constitutionally-declared policies  
5 to serve and protect the people, to give priority to education to foster patriotism and  
6 nationalism and to recognize the vital role of communication and information in nation-  
7 building. Towards this end, it is the objective of this Act to cope up with the mercurial rise of  
8 the influence and prevalence of use of Social Media by inculcating onto the youth and/or  
9 students the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in their unavoidable daily immersion  
10 in Social Media.  
11

12           **SECTION 3.** *Inclusion of Social Media in the Curricula for Primary and Secondary*  
13 *Education* – Social Media awareness shall be part of the curriculum for both primary and  
14 secondary education, in public and private schools, with the following objectives:  
15

- 16           a. Inculcate how various types of Social Media aid in the effective and efficient  
17 dissemination of information;
- 18           b. Inculcate how Social Media helps in shaping public discourse and opinion;
- 19           c. Inculcate how Social Media helps in fostering a more participative  
20 democracy;
- 21           d. Inculcate the importance of upholding truth and the veracity of facts, figures  
22 and events in Social Media;
- 23           e. Inculcate responsible and fair use of Social Media; and
- 24           f. Inculcate the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in the use and/or  
25 enjoyment of Social Media.  
26

1 The Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the Department of  
2 Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall immediately formulate the  
3 necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.  
4

5 **SECTION 4.** *Social Media Awareness as part of the National Service Training*  
6 *Program (NSTP)* – Social Media awareness must be made part of the National Service  
7 Training Program (NSTP), particularly in the service components pertaining to the Literacy  
8 Training Service (LTS) and the Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS).  
9

10 The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and  
11 Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in consultation with the DICT, shall immediately  
12 formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.  
13

14 **SECTION 5.** *Contribution of the Private Sector in Social Media Awareness.* –  
15 Private corporations must formulate and implement effective measures and/or policies in  
16 relation to the responsible, fair and truthful utilization and/or enjoyment of various types of  
17 Social Media. Private corporations must likewise promote the foregoing as part of their  
18 respective Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).  
19

20 The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), in consultation with the DICT, shall  
21 immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this  
22 Section.  
23

24 **SECTION 6.** *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* The DepEd, CHED, SEC, in  
25 consultation with the DICT, shall have the joint responsibility for the adoption of the  
26 implementing rules of this Act within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act.  
27

28 **SECTION 7.** *Separability Clause* – If any section or provision of this Act shall be  
29 declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall  
30 remain in full force and effect.  
31

32 **SECTION 8.** *Effectivity* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
33 publication in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.  
34

35 *Approved.*  
36