

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 237

---

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

---

**AN ACT**  
**REGULATING ONLINE GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENTS AND LIMITING ACCESS**  
**TO ONLINE GAMBLING SITES IN THE PHILIPPINES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Online gambling addiction among minors has become a pressing concern in recent years. Reports revealed that individuals—including children aged 17 and below—are spending thousands, even hundreds of thousands, of pesos on online betting platforms. In a news report, it was even disclosed that minors can easily conceal their identities and log-in to online betting sites, with one saying, “*Sa online, madali lang. Madali lang ang pekehen kung sino ka, kung saan ka or kung ilang taon ka na.*”<sup>1</sup>

This issue is further exacerbated by rapid technological advancements and the lax identity verification systems of online platforms. The lapses on the implementation of rules and regulations of such institutions allow users, particularly minors, to easily fake their personal information, granting them unrestricted access to gambling websites and applications. Consequently, children are prematurely exposed to the societal ill of addiction.

Psychologists and behavioral experts have raised concerns over what they consider a “*silent epidemic*” of gambling addiction among the youth<sup>2</sup>. Some cases have documented minors incurring debts amounting to hundreds of thousands of pesos due to unregulated online gambling access.

---

<sup>1</sup> News Article from Rappler Philippines, November 16, 2024 by Aya Ranas, <https://www.rappler.com/philippines/online-betting-sites-push-youth-gambling-addiction/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.oakpark.com/2025/06/17/gambling-the-silent-epidemic/>

Although the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) prohibits gambling advertisements targeting individuals aged 21 and below, enforcement remains weak. This is particularly true on digital platforms, where advertisements promoting online gambling are widespread and easily accessible to minors.

Moreover, the lack of regulation for linking e-wallet applications such as GCash and PayMaya to online gambling sites exacerbates the situation. These platforms often include built-in features that facilitate online gambling access. As a result, minors can easily circumvent age restrictions and engage in gambling using these platforms.

This proposed measure seeks to regulate the widespread advertisement of online gambling through stricter compliance requirements for gambling operators, advertising companies and platforms and e-wallet service providers. It aims to promote transparency and accountability in online gambling advertisements and access to their websites, particularly to protect minors from exposure and participation in online gambling activities.

This measure is grounded in the State's Constitutional mandate to protect our youth as enshrined in Section 13, Article II of the 1987 Constitution which states, "*The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.*" We strongly believe that without immediate and concrete legislative intervention, the issue will continue to worsen and affect more Filipino youth.

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



**AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**  
Representative, 3<sup>rd</sup> District of Bukidnon

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
*First Regular Session*

HOUSE BILL NO. 237

---

Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE AUDREY KAY T. ZUBIRI**

---

**AN ACT**  
**REGULATING ONLINE GAMBLING ADVERTISEMENTS AND LIMITING ACCESS**  
**TO ONLINE GAMBLING SITES IN THE PHILIPPINES**

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

1           **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “*Electronic Gambling Access*  
2 *Prevention Act of 2025*” or the “*E-GAP Act*”.

3  
4           **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to protect the moral,  
5 psychological, and emotional development of its citizens, especially children and vulnerable  
6 sectors, from the effects of unregulated online gambling and its advertisements. The State  
7 recognizes the need to regulate the dissemination of online gambling content and to establish  
8 stringent access controls to prevent minors from engaging in gambling activities.

9  
10           **SEC. 3. Definition of Terms.** – For purposes of this Act:

- 11  
12           a. **Internet** refers to an international computer network of interoperable packet-switched  
13 data networks. It includes the electronic medium in which online communication takes  
14 place.
- 15           b. **Online gambling** refers to any form of placing, receiving, or otherwise knowingly  
16 transmitting a bet or wager by any means which involves the use, in whole or in part, of  
17 the internet.
- 18           c. **Gambling Operator** refers to any person, entity, or company authorized to offer online  
19 gambling services.
- 20           d. **Advertisement** refers to any visual and/or audible message or post generated, sent,  
21 received, or disseminated to the public about or on a particular product that promote or

1 give publicity by words, designs, images, or any other means through broadcasts,  
2 electronic, optical, print, or whatever form of mass or social media, including indoor and  
3 outdoor advertisements, such as but not limited to signs and billboards.

4 c. **Advertising** refers to the business of conceptualizing, presenting, making available, and  
5 communicating to the public, through any forms of mass or social media, including  
6 documentaries and testimonials, any fact, data, or information about the attributes,  
7 features, quality, or availability of consumer products, services, or credit.

8 f. **Internet Service Providers or ISPs** – refers to

9 1. Any public or private entity that provides to users of its service the ability to  
10 communicate by means of a computer system; and

11 2. Any other entity that processes or stores computer data on behalf of such  
12 communication service or its users.

13 g. **Digital platforms** refer to information and communication technology-enabled  
14 mechanisms that connect and integrate producers and users in online environments  
15 where goods and services are requested, developed, and sold, and data is generated and  
16 exchanged such as, but not limited to, e-marketplace, mobile application platforms,  
17 online delivery platforms, social media platforms, and travel platforms;

18 h. **Advertising technology or ad tech companies** refer to any natural or juridical person that  
19 develops, operates, or provides digital systems, platforms, software, or services designed  
20 to facilitate, automate, manage, target, deliver, measure, or optimize online advertising  
21 content. For the purpose of this Act, such companies shall be deemed to have participated  
22 in the publication or dissemination of online gambling advertisements if their technology,  
23 tools, or services are used in the targeting, placement, or amplification of advertisements  
24 related to gambling, gaming, or wagering, whether directly or indirectly.

25 i. **Electronic wallet (e-wallet) service provider** refers to an entity that provides electronic  
26 money issuance or digital wallet services by storing monetary value electronically in an  
27 instrument or device, making it widely acceptable for payments and withdrawable in  
28 cash or cash equivalent, and which is registered or licensed by the Bangko Sentral ng  
29 Pilipinas (BSP) as an Electronic Money Issuer or Operator of a Payment System.

30 j. **Know Your Customer (KYC)** refers to the process of verifying the identity of users before  
31 granting them access to online gambling platforms.

32 k. **Young individual** refers to any person below twenty-one (21) years old.

33  
34 **SEC. 4. Prohibited Media and Venues for Online Gambling Advertisements.** –  
35 Notwithstanding any other provision of law, all forms of direct or indirect advertisements,

1 promotions, sponsorships, and marketing materials related to online gambling, whether in  
2 digital, print, audio, or visual format, shall be strictly prohibited on the following platforms and  
3 venues:

- 4
- 5 a. Free-to-air and cable television programs, including but not limited to live  
6 broadcasts, pre-recorded segments, and sponsored content, regardless of the  
7 broadcast time;
- 8 b. Radio broadcasts, whether on AM, FM, digital, or satellite radio, including paid  
9 segments, promotional plugs, or subliminal advertising;
- 10 c. Print publications that are primarily directed toward minors, including but not limited  
11 to youth magazines, comic books, educational newsletters, and school newspapers;
- 12 d. Public spaces that are immediately accessible to minors such as but not limited to  
13 public transportation vehicles, streets and alleys, public parks, schools, buildings,  
14 malls, bars, restaurants, transportation terminals, public markets, spaces used as  
15 evacuation centers, government offices, public utility vehicles as well as private  
16 vehicles covered by app-based transport network services and other recreational  
17 spaces such as, but not limited to, cinema halls, and theaters;
- 18 e. Streaming services, mobile applications, or e-wallet applications; and
- 19 f. Public educational institutions, including primary, secondary, and tertiary schools, as  
20 well as school-sponsored events, such as academic fairs, sporting events, training  
21 camps, and student conventions, whether held on-campus or in public venues.

22

23 Any gambling operator, media provider, advertising agency, or other entity found in  
24 violation of this provision shall be subject to the penalties outlined under Section 10 of this Act.

25

26 To safeguard the welfare of children and young individuals from exposure to harmful and  
27 exploitative content or undue influence by public figure endorsements, any individual or team  
28 athletes, artists, performers, influencers, and health professionals are likewise prohibited from  
29 accepting sponsorships, endorsing, posting, or promoting online gambling, which includes the  
30 mention or tagging through social media, of the names or online gambling applications. All  
31 persons receiving remuneration, in whatever form, for promoting or encouraging the use of  
32 online gambling shall also be covered by the ban under this Section.

33

34 **SEC. 5. Content Restrictions on Online Gambling Advertisements.** – To ensure the  
35 responsible marketing of online gambling and to protect vulnerable sectors, particularly minors

1 and young adults, all online gambling advertisements shall adhere to the following content  
2 standards:

- 3
- 4 a. Prohibition on Misleading Claims – Advertisements shall not misrepresent or  
5 exaggerate the chances of winning, the predictability of outcomes, or the potential  
6 financial returns associated with gambling activities. All promotional content must  
7 clearly communicate that gambling involves financial risk and is not a guaranteed  
8 means of income or profit.
  - 9 b. Age-Appropriate Representation – No individual who is below twenty-one (21) years  
10 of age shall be featured, depicted, or portrayed engaging in gambling-related  
11 activities in any form of advertisement, whether real, animated, or digitally created.
  - 12 c. Ban on Child-Oriented Imagery – Advertisements shall not use visuals, characters,  
13 sound effects, music, or themes that are typically associated with children’s  
14 programming, toys, games, or entertainment. This includes, but is not limited to,  
15 cartoon characters, nursery music, and youth-centric slang or memes.
  - 16 d. Prohibition Against Irresponsible Messaging – Online gambling shall not be  
17 portrayed as a viable solution to financial hardship, emotional distress, social anxiety,  
18 or any personal problems. Advertisements suggesting gambling as a form of  
19 escapism or financial rescue are strictly prohibited.
  - 20 e. No Association with Success or Social Prestige – Advertisements shall not depict  
21 gambling as a mark of maturity, success, popularity, or enhanced social status.  
22 Gambling must not be framed as a rite of passage or a symbol of achievement or  
23 lifestyle aspiration.
  - 24 f. Display of Disclaimer – All advertisements must include a visible and prominently  
25 display a disclaimer stating: “*This platform is strictly for users twenty-one (21) years  
26 old and above. Play responsibly.*”
- 27

28 Violations of this Section shall be subject to regulatory action, including the imposition  
29 of administrative penalties and potential revocation of advertising permits, as prescribed under  
30 Section 10 of this Act.

31

32 **SEC. 6. Obligations of Internet Service Providers, Mobile Network Operators, and**  
33 **Digital Platforms.** – To ensure effective implementation of this Act and limit public access to  
34 unauthorized online gambling content, all Internet Service Providers (ISPs), mobile

1 telecommunications providers, digital applications, and similar platforms operating within the  
2 Philippines shall have the following obligations:

- 3
- 4 a. *Website Blocking* – ISPs and mobile providers shall, upon order of the Philippine  
5 Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) or the Department of Justice –  
6 Office of Cybercrime (DOJ-OOC), block access to all unlicensed, unauthorized, or  
7 foreign-based online gambling websites and platforms operating in violation of this  
8 Act or existing laws.
- 9 b. *Application Removal* – Digital application distribution platforms, including  
10 application stores and mobile marketplaces, shall immediately remove or disable  
11 access to all gambling-related applications that do not possess valid and current  
12 permits issued by PAGCOR and other relevant regulatory agencies.
- 13 c. *Mandatory Response Period* – All take-down, blocking, or removal requests issued  
14 by PAGCOR or the DOJ-OOC shall be acted upon within seventy-two (72) hours  
15 from official receipt. Failure to comply within this period shall constitute a violation  
16 subject to enforcement under Section 10 this Act.
- 17 d. *Reporting and Compliance Mechanism* – All covered entities shall maintain a  
18 mechanism for regular reporting to PAGCOR detailing the number of blocked  
19 websites, removed applications, and pending takedown requests. Such reports shall  
20 be submitted on a quarterly basis or as required under the implementing rules and  
21 regulations.
- 22 e. *Penalties for Non-Compliance* – Failure to comply with the obligations under this  
23 Section may result in administrative penalties including fines, suspension of licenses,  
24 and, where applicable, revocation of authority to operate digital or  
25 telecommunication services in the Philippines.
- 26

27 **SEC. 7. Responsibilities of Ad Tech Companies and Digital Platforms.** – To strengthen  
28 the regulation of online gambling advertisements and ensure accountability in digital  
29 advertisement distribution, all advertising technology companies and digital advertising  
30 platforms operating within or targeting users in the Philippines shall comply with the following  
31 obligations:

- 32
- 33 a. *Mandatory Compliance Audits* – All covered entities shall conduct quarterly internal  
34 audits of their ad delivery systems to ensure compliance with this Act and other  
35 applicable gambling advertising restrictions. The results of such audits shall be made

1 available to PAGCOR, the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), and  
2 other relevant regulatory bodies upon request.

3 b. Ad Serving Transparency and Recordkeeping – Platforms shall maintain real-time,  
4 accessible records of all gambling-related advertisements served through their  
5 networks. These records shall include information on:

- 6 (i) The identity of the gambling operator or advertiser;
- 7 (ii) The platform, application, or website on which the ad appeared;
- 8 (iii) Targeting parameters, including age filters and demographics;
- 9 (iv) Duration and frequency of the ad campaign.

10  
11 Such records shall be preserved for a minimum of two (2) years and shall be accessible  
12 to regulators for inspection, compliance monitoring, or investigation.

13  
14 c. Prohibition on Circumvention of Age-Gating – No advertising technology provider  
15 or programmatic platform shall knowingly develop, enable, or support technologies,  
16 mechanisms, or practices that bypass, disable, or manipulate age-verification systems  
17 or other measures designed to restrict exposure of gambling advertisements to minors  
18 and vulnerable users.

19  
20 **SEC. 8. Access Control and Age Verification.** – To ensure that minors and vulnerable  
21 users have restricted access to online gambling, operators thereof shall strictly adhere to the  
22 following:

23  
24 a. Online gambling operators must implement a robust Know Your Customer procedure  
25 that shall include:

- 26 1. Submission of a government-issued valid ID;
- 27 2. Live photograph or video verification of the user;
- 28 3. Age verification ensuring the user is 21 years old and above.

29  
30 b. No user shall be allowed to create or maintain an account for online gambling services  
31 without completing the KYC verification.

32 c. Digital and e-wallet service providers must:

- 33 (i) Block access to gambling content for unverified users and users under the age of  
34 twenty-one (21); and

1 (ii) Disable integration with gambling features unless proper age and identity  
2 verification is in place.

- 3 d. Online platforms and e-wallet services integrated with gambling applications shall also  
4 be mandated to prevent access to gambling content by unverified users or users under  
5 the age of twenty-one (21).

6  
7 **SEC. 9. Permits.** – All online gambling related advertisements shall be subject to prior  
8 permits from the PAGCOR, Games and Amusement Board (GAB), the Movie and Television  
9 Review and Classification Board (MTRCB);

10  
11 The permit to advertise shall be issued on a per platform and per location basis and shall  
12 be reviewed by the PAGCOR annually.

13  
14 **SEC. 10. Penalties.** –

- 15  
16 a. Any person, entity, or online gambling operator found violating any provision of  
17 Sections 4, 5, 6, and 8, of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties to be  
18 imposed by the PAGCOR after due notice and hearing:

- 19  
20 a. First Offense – a fine of not less than Twenty Million Pesos  
21 (Php20,000,000.00) and suspension of license for six (6) months;  
22 b. Second Offense – a fine of not less than Fifty Million Pesos  
23 (50,000,000.00) or a suspension of license for one (1) year; and  
24 c. Third and Succeeding Offenses – a fine of not less than One Hundred  
25 Million Pesos (Php100,000,000.00) and permanent revocation of its  
26 permit to operate.

27  
28 The continued or willful violation of the foregoing may subject the offender to  
29 criminal prosecution under existing laws.

- 30  
31 b. Any person or entity found violating any provision of Section 7 of this Act shall be  
32 subject to the following penalties which may be imposed simultaneously by the NTC  
33 after due notice and hearing:

34

- 1           a.       a fine of not less than Ten Million Pesos (Php10,000,000.00) for each
- 2                     instance of deliberate circumvention or willful non-compliance;
- 3           b.       Temporary or permanent suspension from operating within Philippine
- 4                     digital advertising markets; and
- 5           c.       Additional sanctions as may be imposed by PAGCOR, or the Department
- 6                     of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

7

8           **SEC. 11. *PAGCOR as Lead Agency.*** – PAGCOR shall be the lead agency to effectively

9 implement the provisions and purposes of this Act. Further, to complement regulatory efforts

10 and mitigate the social and psychological harms of gambling, PAGCOR, in coordination with

11 the Department of Education (DepEd), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Department of

12 Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), shall implement the following programs:

- 13
- 14       a. National Information and Awareness Campaigns – PAGCOR shall lead annual
- 15             nationwide information campaigns focused on the risks of gambling addiction,
- 16             particularly among minors and vulnerable populations. These campaigns shall utilize
- 17             print, broadcast, and digital media, including social media platforms, to educate the
- 18             public on the warning signs of gambling problems and promote responsible gambling
- 19             behaviors.
- 20       b. Curriculum Integration and Digital Literacy – The DepEd, in consultation with PAGCOR
- 21             and relevant stakeholders, shall develop and integrate age-appropriate digital literacy
- 22             modules into the K–12 curriculum. These modules shall include content on the nature
- 23             and risks of gambling, media and advertising literacy, and healthy online behaviors.
- 24       c. Community-Based Counseling and Support Services – The DOH and the DSWD, in
- 25             partnership with local government units (LGUs), shall establish and operate community-
- 26             level hotlines, help centers, and referral systems for individuals and families affected by
- 27             gambling addiction. These services shall be staffed by trained professionals and
- 28             accessible free of charge to the public.
- 29       d. Program Funding and Monitoring – PAGCOR shall allocate a portion of its annual gross
- 30             revenues to support the development, implementation, and monitoring of the above-
- 31             mentioned programs. An annual report on the status, reach, and impact of these initiatives
- 32             shall be submitted to Congress by PAGCOR.

33

34           **SEC. 12. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The Philippine Amusement and

35 Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR), in coordination with the Department of Information and

1 Communications Technology (DICT), and the Department of Justice (DOJ), shall formulate and  
2 issue the necessary implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the  
3 effectivity of this Act.

4  
5 **SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act shall be declared  
6 unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not otherwise affected shall remain in full force  
7 and effect.

8  
9 **SEC. 15. *Repealing Clause.*** – All other laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations,  
10 rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the  
11 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended, accordingly.

12  
13 **SEC. 14. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in  
14 the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*