

Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 1675



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Introduced by: **REP. SALVADOR A. PLEYTO, SR.**

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### EXPLANATORY NOTE

The rapid expansion of online gambling in the Philippines presents a complex challenge, particularly concerning its profound impact on the nation's youth. While digital platforms offer convenience and accessibility, these very attributes make online gambling a pervasive and insidious threat to the well-being of Filipino minors and young adults. There is an urgent and undeniable need for comprehensive regulation to curb their involvement and addiction, supported by stiffer penalties for violations.

The accessibility of online gambling platforms, often requiring little more than a smartphone and an internet connection, has blurred the lines between casual entertainment and dangerous addiction. Unlike traditional brick-and-mortar casinos with physical barriers and stricter age checks, the virtual nature of online gambling makes it alarmingly easy for minors to bypass safeguards, misrepresent their age, and fall prey to its allure. This ease of access, coupled with aggressive online advertising and the psychological design of many games, can quickly lead to compulsive behavior and severe gambling addiction among impressionable young minds.

The consequences of youth involvement in online gambling are far-reaching and devastating. Academically, it can lead to declining grades, absenteeism, and disinterest in education as gambling consumes their time and focus. Financially, it can result in significant debt, theft, and even criminal activities to fund their addiction, impacting not only the individual but also their families and communities. Psychologically, gambling addiction can manifest as anxiety, depression, social isolation, and, in severe cases, suicidal ideation. The long-term societal cost of a generation grappling with such issues is immense, undermining human potential and societal stability.

Therefore, robust legislative intervention is imperative. Effective regulation must include stringent age verification protocols that go beyond simple checkboxes, potentially incorporating advanced digital identity verification and parental control mechanisms. Restrictions on advertising that targets or appeals to minors are crucial, ensuring that the marketing of online gambling does not inadvertently normalize or glorify it for young audiences. Furthermore, licensed operators must be mandated to implement responsible gaming tools, such as self-exclusion options, deposit limits, and time-out features, to empower users to manage their habits.

Crucially, these regulations must be backed by stiffer penalties for violations. Current penalties may not be sufficient to deter unscrupulous operators who prioritize profit over public welfare or individuals who knowingly facilitate minor involvement. Increased fines, longer prison sentences, and permanent revocation of licenses for operators found to be exploiting or enabling underage gambling are essential to send a clear message: **THE PROTECTION OF FILIPINO YOUTH IS PARAMOUNT**. Such penalties would not only punish offenders but also serve as a powerful deterrent, compelling all stakeholders in the online gambling ecosystem to adhere strictly to the law and prioritize ethical operations.

In conclusion, regulating online gambling is not merely about controlling an industry; it is about safeguarding the future of the Philippines by protecting its youth. A comprehensive legislative framework, fortified by stringent enforcement and severe penalties, is a necessary and urgent step to mitigate the societal harm caused by unchecked online gambling and to ensure a healthier, more secure environment for the next generation.

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



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**AN ACT REGULATING THE PROLIFERATION OF ONLINE GAMBLING IN THE PHILIPPINES, CURBING THE INVOLVEMENT AND ADDICTION THERETO OF FILIPINO YOUTHS, PROVIDING FOR STIFFER PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.**

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

**SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** - This Act shall be known as the "Youth Protection Against Online Gambling Act of 2025"

**SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** - It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect and promote the welfare of its citizens, especially the youth, from the detrimental effects of online gambling, including addiction, financial ruin, and moral decay. The State recognizes the need to regulate online gambling activities to ensure public order, safety, and morality, while also providing avenues for responsible gaming for adults and effective rehabilitation for those afflicted with gambling addiction.

**SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.*** - For purposes of this Act, the following terms shall mean:

a) **Online Gambling:** Refers to any form of gambling activity conducted through the internet, including but not limited to online casinos, sports betting, online poker, and other games of chance or skill where money or anything of value is wagered, and where the outcome is determined by chance or a combination of chance and skill.

b) **Online Gambling Operator:** Any person, entity, or corporation, whether local or foreign, that directly or indirectly operates, manages, or facilitates an online gambling platform or service accessible within the Philippines.

c) **Minor/Youth:** Refers to any person below eighteen (18) years of age.

d) **Gambling Addiction:** A progressive behavioral disorder characterized by an uncontrollable urge to gamble, leading to severe personal, social, and financial consequences.

e) Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR): The government-owned and controlled corporation primarily responsible for regulating and licensing gambling operations in the Philippines.

f) Relevant Government Agencies: Shall include, but not be limited to, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), the Philippine National Police (PNP), and the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI).

**SECTION 4. *Prohibited Acts.*** The following acts related to online gambling are hereby declared unlawful:

a) Allowing Minors to Gamble: Any online gambling operator, or any person acting on their behalf, who knowingly allows, facilitates, or encourages a minor to participate in online gambling activities.

b) Operating Without a License: Operating an online gambling platform or service accessible within the Philippines without a valid and current license issued by PAGCOR, or operating beyond the scope of such license.

c) Aiding and Abetting Minor Involvement: Any person who knowingly aids, abets, or conspires with an online gambling operator or a minor to facilitate the minor's involvement in online gambling.

d) Misrepresentation of Age: Any minor who misrepresents their age to gain access to online gambling platforms.

e) Unlicensed Promotion/Advertising: Promoting or advertising online gambling services within the Philippines without proper authorization from PAGCOR.

f) Facilitating Unlicensed Operations: Any financial institution, payment gateway, or internet service provider that knowingly facilitates transactions or provides services to unlicensed online gambling operators.

**SECTION 5. *Stricter Regulation and Licensing.***

a) Enhanced Licensing Requirements: PAGCOR shall formulate and implement stricter licensing requirements for online gambling operators, including but not limited to:

- i. Proof of financial capability and integrity.
- ii. Robust age verification systems.
- iii. Implementation of responsible gaming features (e.g., self-exclusion, deposit limits, time limits).
- iv. Compliance with anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing regulations.
- v. Submission of regular audits of their systems and financial transactions.

b) Regular Audits and Monitoring: PAGCOR, in coordination with relevant government agencies, shall conduct regular and unannounced audits and monitoring

of all licensed online gambling operators to ensure strict compliance with this Act and other relevant laws.

c) Revocation of License: PAGCOR shall have the power to suspend or revoke the license of any online gambling operator found to be in violation of this Act or its implementing rules and regulations.

**SECTION 6. *Age Verification and Access Restrictions.***

a) Mandatory Age Verification: All online gambling operators shall implement stringent age verification protocols at the point of registration and continuous monitoring thereafter. This shall include, but not be limited to, requiring valid government-issued identification, biometric verification where feasible, and other reliable methods to confirm the age and identity of users.

b) Parental Control Features: Online gambling operators shall provide and prominently display information on how parents and guardians can utilize parental control software and other tools to restrict access to online gambling sites.

c) Blocking of Unlicensed Sites: The DICT and NTC, in coordination with internet service providers (ISPs), shall be mandated to block access to all unlicensed online gambling websites and applications accessible within the Philippines. PAGCOR shall regularly provide a list of such unlicensed sites.

**SECTION 7. *Advertising and Promotion Restrictions.***

a) Prohibition on Youth-Targeted Advertising: All forms of advertising and promotion of online gambling shall be prohibited in media, platforms, or venues primarily aimed at or significantly accessible to minors, as well as advertising on primetime hours. Such advertising and promotion shall be coordinated with the Ad Standards Council (ADS).

b) Mandatory Responsible Gaming Messages: All advertisements and promotions for online gambling shall prominently display clear and concise messages about responsible gaming, the risks of gambling addiction, and contact information for support services.

c) Restriction on Endorsements: The use of celebrities, influencers, or public figures who appeal primarily to a youth audience to endorse or promote online gambling shall be prohibited.

**SECTION 8. *Rehabilitation and Support Programs.***

a) Establishment of Support Programs: The Department of Health (DOH), in coordination with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and local government units (LGUs), shall establish and implement comprehensive programs for the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of gambling addiction, particularly among the youth.

b) Funding for Programs: A percentage of the revenues collected from licensed online gambling operations, as determined by PAGCOR, shall be allocated to fund these rehabilitation and support programs.

c) Awareness Campaigns: The DOH and DepEd shall conduct nationwide awareness campaigns on the dangers of online gambling and gambling addiction, particularly targeting schools and communities.

## **SECTION 9. Penalties.**

a) For Online Gambling Operators:

- i. Any online gambling operator found in violation of Section 4(a) (Allowing Minors to Gamble) or Section 4(b) (Operating Without a License) shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than three (3) years but not more than ten (10) years, or a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (PhP 50,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Pesos (PhP 500,000.00), or both, and immediate revocation of license, if any.
- ii. For subsequent offenses, the penalty shall be imprisonment of not less than five (5) years but not more than 15 years, or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 100,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 500,000.00), or both, and permanent disqualification from operating any gambling activity in the Philippines.

b) For Persons Aiding and Abetting Minor Involvement: Any person found in violation of Section 4(c) shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than 2 years but not more than 6 years, or a fine of not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (PhP 10,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Pesos (PhP), or both.

c) For Minors Misrepresenting Age: Any minor found in violation of Section 4(d) shall be subject to intervention programs by the DSWD, and their parents/guardians shall be required to attend counseling sessions. Repeated offenses may lead to further appropriate legal action under existing laws concerning minors.

d) For Unlicensed Promotion/Advertising: Any person or entity found in violation of Section 4(e) shall suffer the penalty of imprisonment of not less than two years but not more than five years, or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 100,000.00) but not more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP500,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the court.

e) For Facilitating Unlicensed Operations: Any financial institution, payment gateway, or internet service provider found in violation of Section 4(f) shall suffer a fine of not less than Ten Thousand Pesos (PhP 10,000.00) but not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 100,000.00) for each instance of violation, without prejudice to other penalties under existing laws.

f) Corporate Liability: If the offender is a corporation, partnership, or any other juridical entity, the penalty shall be imposed upon the president, general manager, managing partner, or the officer-in-charge of the operation.

**SECTION 10. *Enforcement.*** - PAGCOR, in coordination with the PNP, NBI, DICT, and NTC, shall be the primary government agencies responsible for the strict implementation and enforcement of this Act. They shall have the authority to conduct investigations, make arrests, and file appropriate charges against violators.

**SECTION 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).*** Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, PAGCOR, in consultation with the DOH, DSWD, DepEd, DICT, NTC, PNP, and NBI, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SECTION 12. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 13. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, decrees, executive orders, proclamations, rules, and regulations, or parts thereof, inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 14. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

*Approved,*