

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2129



Introduced by Representative LEILA M. DE LIMA

**AN ACT
PROHIBITING ONLINE GAMBLING IN THE PHILIPPINES AND FOR OTHER
PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 9 of the 1987 Constitution provides that “[t]he State shall promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation and free the people from poverty through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, a rising standard of living, and an improved quality of life for all.”

Section 13 of the same article states that 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.”

As online gambling has become easier to access and has been promoted by numerous influencers and celebrities, many have become addicted including minors; relationships were ruined; many fell into debt; and livelihoods, health and education were neglected. Worse, addiction to online gambling could also lead to road accidents as there are already reported incidents of Public Utility Vehicle (PUV) drivers who play while driving.

With these harmful and damaging effects, the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) has strongly urged government to outlaw all forms of online gambling calling it “a deep and widespread moral crisis” affecting the country.¹

No less than President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos, Jr. acknowledges that online gambling is destroying families as it has become more accessible to Filipinos

¹ Lagarde, Roy. (18 July 2025). CBCP head rejects Pagcor defense of online gambling. Retrieved from <https://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/cbcp-head-rejects-pagcor-defense-of-online-gambling/>.

because of technology and digitalization.² But according to Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, the government is still reviewing the broader implications of banning all forms of online gambling amid reports that many Filipinos have fallen into financial ruin due to “gambling addiction.”³

Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) Chair and CEO Alejandro Tengco, on the other hand, has opposed the total ban on online gaming, stressing that the government earns billions from this.⁴

However, the government’s earnings from online gambling are worthless if they come at the cost of ruining Filipino families, mental health of many individuals, the future of our youth, and the moral fiber of our nation. As CBCP President Cardinal Pablo Virgilio “Ambo” David said, “the social ills brought by online gambling far outweigh the supposed billions of revenues it brings into government coffers.”⁵

This Representation believes that it will also be difficult to regulate online gambling as Filipinos, especially the youth, have easy access to technology and digital applications catering to these games. As to the concern that implementing a total ban on online gambling would likely drive the industry underground, this measure aims to mandate relevant government agencies to conduct an all-out crackdown on illegal platforms and activities related to online gamblings, similar to what we did to Philippine Offshore Gaming Operators (POGOs).

This proposed legislation seeks to prohibit online gambling in the country.

Similar measures were filed by Senators Juan Miguel Zubiri, Loren Legarda, Raffy Tulfo, Joel Villanueva, Alan Peter Cayetano and Pia Cayetano in the Senate, and Rep. Bienvenido Abante, Jr. in the House of Representatives.

Clearly, online gambling is a growing menace that should be stopped and banned immediately.

The urgent passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


LEILA M. DE LIMA

² Flores, Helen. (21 July 2025). Online gambling ruins families, says President Marcos. The Philippine Star. Retrieved from <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2025/07/21/2459503/online-gambling-ruins-families-says-president-marcos/amp/>.

³ Esguerra, Darry John. (20 July 2025). Palace still weighing online gambling ban. Philippine News Agency. Retrieved from <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1254691>.

⁴ Salcedo, Mary Joy. (8 July 2025). Pagcor wants tighter control, not total ban, on online gambling. Philippine Daily Inquirer. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2079743/pagcor-wants-tighter-control-not-total-ban-on-online-gambling>.

⁵ Cabalza, Dexter. (21 July 2025). Church stands firm vs online gambling, insists on total ban. Philippine Daily Inquirer. Retrieved from <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2084652/church-stands-firm-vs-online-gambling-insists-on-total-ban/amp>.

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

CHAPTER I
PRELIMINARY PROVISIONS

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Anti-Online or E-*
2 *Gambling Act*”.

3
4 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The Constitution mandates the protection of
5 life, dignity, rights and welfare of the Filipino people.

6
7 Article II, Section 13 of the Constitution provides that the “State recognizes the
8 vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical,
9 moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being.”

10
11 With these fundamental principles, it is hereby declared the policy of the State
12 to ban all forms of online gambling. The State shall address and promote awareness
13 on the risks of online gambling and its detrimental effects to families, minors, students
14 and vulnerable sectors.

15
16 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – The following terms are hereby defined, as
17 follows:

18
19 a) *Internet* refers to a global computer network, consisting of interconnected
20 networks, providing online information and communication facilities;

21
22 b) *Internet Service Providers (ISPs)* refers to any public or private entity that
23 provides access to the internet or computer system;

1 c) *Online gambling* refers to any form of placing, receiving, or otherwise
2 knowingly transmitting a bet or wager by any means which involves the use,
3 in whole or in part, of the internet;
4

5 a. *Digital platforms* refer to information and communication technology-
6 enabled mechanisms that connect and integrate producers and users in
7 online environments where goods and services are requested, developed,
8 and sold, and data is generated and exchanged; and
9

10 b. *Electronic wallet (e-wallet)* refers to an entity that provides electronic money
11 issuance or digital wallet services by storing monetary value electronically
12 in an instrument or device, making it widely acceptable for payments and
13 withdrawable in cash or cash equivalent, and which is registered or licensed
14 by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) as an Electronic Money Issuer or
15 Operator of a Payment System which shall include credit card companies;
16

17 **SEC. 4. *Prohibited Acts.*** – Online gambling is prohibited and declared unlawful
18 in the Philippines. As such, it shall be prohibited for any person or entity to conduct or
19 offer online gambling, as defined under this Act. This prohibition shall include but is
20 not limited to the following activities:
21

22 a) Establishment, operation, maintenance or facilitation of online gambling
23 platforms;
24

25 b) Promotion, advertisement, endorsement, or distribution of materials for
26 online gambling in traditional media and digital platforms including social
27 media, mobile apps, websites or other internet-based communication
28 channels;
29

30 c) Processing or enabling online payments, electronic wallets, fund transfers,
31 or withdrawals or other digital payments connected to online gambling. E-
32 wallets and mobile applications are prohibited from linking to online
33 gambling platforms;
34

35 d) Providing access to online gambling sites or apps via internet services or
36 digital platforms;
37

38 e) Creation, selling, or distribution of any software or codes designed for online
39 gambling;
40

41 f) Participating in any online gambling activity as a player, bettor or source of
42 funding.
43

44 **SEC. 5 *Obligations of the State, Public Authorities and Private Entities.*** – Public
45 authorities and private entities shall take all necessary measures to ensure the total
46 prohibition of online gambling and other related unlawful activities. These measures
47 shall include but are not limited to:

- 1 a) The National Bureau of Investigation, in coordination with the Philippine
2 National Police (PNP) Anti-Cybercrime Group, the Department of
3 Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and PAGCOR,
4 shall implement an all-out crackdown on all illegal online gambling and
5 related activities. PAGCOR shall coordinate with law enforcement
6 agencies to report individuals or entities found to be operating in
7 circumvention of the provisions of this Act;
8
- 9 b) PAGCOR, in coordination with the Department of Education (DepEd),
10 the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and
11 Development (DSWD), and other government agencies, in collaboration
12 with relevant civil society organizations including those from the youth
13 sector and health advocates, shall conduct regular national awareness
14 campaigns in traditional media and all digital platforms to promote and
15 adequately provide crucial information on the risks, conflicts and
16 detrimental effects of online gambling;
17
- 18 c) The DepEd shall develop and integrate education on the risks of
19 gambling and digital literacy as an obligatory curriculum. This shall
20 include content on the nature of online gambling and other online
21 activities that has risks of addiction, conflicts and unhealthy behaviors;
22
- 23 d) The DOH and DSWD, in partnership with local government units (LGUs),
24 medical and health experts, shall establish and operate community-level
25 counseling, support services and rehabilitation centers for individuals
26 and families affected by gambling addiction. These agencies shall also
27 conduct periodic assessments to evaluate the effectivity, outcomes and
28 impact of its program.
29
- 30 e) The Department of Justice (DOJ), in coordination with DICT and the
31 National Telecommunications Commission (NTC), shall conduct the
32 takedown of gambling sites and removal of web or digital applications
33 enabling online gambling.
34

35 **SEC. 6. Penalties.** – Any person, entity, gambling operator and digital payment
36 systems in violation of this Act shall be subject to the following penalties:
37

- 38 a) First Offense – a fine of not less than Thirty Million Pesos
39 (P30,000,000.00) and suspension of license for twelve (12) months;
40
- 41 b) Second Offense – a fine of not less than Fifty Million Pesos
42 (P50,000,000.00) or a suspension of license for two years; and
43
- 44 c) Third and Succeeding Offenses – a fine of not less than One Hundred
45 Million Pesos (P100,000,000.00) and permanent revocation of its license
46 or permit to operate. The President, Chief Operating Officer, General
47 Manager, Treasurer, and/or Finance Officer of the company or

1 corporation shall likewise be held criminally liable and may be penalized
2 with imprisonment of not more than six (6) years. If the offender is a
3 government official or employee, the penalty shall be imprisonment for
4 six (6) years, and shall suffer perpetual absolute disqualification from
5 holding any appointive or elective position in government or in any
6 agency, entity, or instrumentality thereof.
7

8 **SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within sixty (60) days from the
9 effectivity of this Act, PAGCOR, DICT, and the DOJ, shall jointly promulgate the
10 Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) for the effective implementation of this
11 measure and shall ensure the full dissemination of the Act and the IRR to the public in
12 all traditional media and digital platforms.
13

14 **SEC. 8. *Separability Cause.*** – If for any reason any part or provision of this Act
15 is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other parts or provisions hereof which are
16 not affected thereby shall remain and continue to be in full force and effect.
17

18 **SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and
19 regulations and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this
20 Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.
21

22 **SEC. 10. *Effectivity.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
23 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,