

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2619



Introduced by **HON. KENNETH T. GATCHALIAN**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

During the COVID-19 pandemic, online activity in the Philippines surged, including online gambling. With weak regulations, gambling platforms have exploited vulnerable Filipinos – especially minors and marginalized groups – by promoting quick-money games through ads and celebrity endorsements.

The easy access to online gambling has led to rising mental health issues, financial troubles, addiction, and increased crime rates. Reported cases include theft, shootings over winnings, and a surge of property crimes in some cities. The disappearance of 34 sabungeros linked to illegal e-sabong operations highlights the severity of the problem.

Unlicensed gambling websites are widespread. As of June 2025, the Department of Information and Communications Technology has shut down 7,000 unauthorized sites, with numbers continuing to grow. PAGCOR has also urged the public to report individuals struggling with online gambling addiction to restrict their access.

To address these issues, this bill seeks to **regulate online gambling**, crack down on illegal operations, and penalize those responsible. It aims to maintain peace, order, and moral integrity in the country by proposing the following regulatory measures:

1. Designation of proper regulatory authorities to oversee and enforce online gambling laws.
2. to issue licenses and to oversee compliance of online gambling operators;
3. Prohibition of certain persons, including persons below twenty-one (21) years of age, and government officials and employees from participating in any online gambling activities;

4. Requirement on due diligence and authentication measures of players during account registration and account log-in on the online gambling platforms to be undertaken by the online gambling platform operator;
5. Regulation on account funding and withdrawal, including the prohibition on the linking of e-wallets to online gambling platforms;
6. Imposition of guidelines on advertising online gambling;
7. Mandatory registration of online gambling operators with the Anti-Money Laundering Council as a covered person;
8. Setting a minimum cash-in (PHP 10,000.00) and top-up (PHP 5,000.00) deposit in online gambling platforms;
9. Engagement of third-party auditor to ensure proper reporting of gross gaming revenues earned from online gambling;
10. Imposition of documentary stamp tax on every wager placed and income tax on winnings from online gambling games;
11. Restrictions on online gambling promotional sponsorships;
12. Prohibition on campaign contribution from online gambling operators;
13. Issuance of disabling order to restrict or block access unlicensed online gambling platform or prohibited online content;
14. Requirement on online gambling platforms to institute a mechanism to ban and exclude players and a responsible gaming program; and
15. Imposition of penalties for the commission of prohibited acts and other violations of the law.

In view of the foregoing, immediate passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



KENNETH T. GATCHALIAN

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NINETEENTH CONGRESS
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Introduced by **HON. KENNETH T. GATCHALIAN**

AN ACT REGULATING ONLINE GAMBLING IN THE PHILIPPINES

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 “Online Gambling Regulatory Act”.

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. – The State recognizes that in a democratic society, the maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and property, and promotion of the general welfare is paramount. It is thereby the policy of the State to protect the people from all matters affecting the security of its social order and free people from poverty through policies that provide an improved quality of life for all.

Furthermore, the State recognizes the role of youth in nation building, Hence, the state shall promote and protect the physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being of the youth.

SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. – For the purposes of this Act:

- a. *Advertising* refers to the business of conceptualizing, presenting, making available and communicating to the public, through any form of mass media, any fact, data or information about the attributes, features, quality or availability of consumer products, services or credit;
- b. *Biometric information* refers to front-facing photograph, fingerprint, iris scan and/or such other identifiable features of an individual;
- c. *Celebrity* refers to any natural person who, by his or her accomplishments or fame, or by reason of his or her profession or calling, gives the public a legitimate interest in his or her doings, affairs and character. The term includes anyone who has arrived at a position where public attention is focused upon him or her as a person, such as, but not limited to, actors, athletes and other sports personalities, war heroes, famous inventors, social media influencers and explorers, among others;

d. *Electronic money issuers* refer to entities which provide money transfer or remittance services using electronic stored money value system and similar digital financial services;

e. *Electronic wallet or e-wallet* refers to an electronic instrument or device that can store digital value accessible via mobile phones or other access device and other similar products;

f. *Internet intermediaries* refer to persons or entities that provide infrastructure, platforms, access to, and host, transmit and index content, products and services originated by third parties on the internet. These include, among others:

(1) Internet service providers;

(2) Web hosting providers including domain name registrars;

(3) Internet search engines and portals;

(4) E-commerce intermediaries;

(5) Internet payment system providers; and

(6) Participative network platform providers including social media intermediaries.

g. *Multi-Factor Authentication* refers to an authentication method that require two (2) or more verification factors to gain access to a resource;

h. *Online Content* refers to textual, aural, or visual content published on a website, including social media platforms;

i. *Online Gambling Games* refer to virtual games of chance and mixed games of chance and skills such as Traditional Bingo Games, eBingo Games, eCasino Games, Sports Betting, Specialty Games, Online Poker Games, or any suite of games that may be allowed by Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR);

j. *Online Gambling* refers to the conduct of online games and the taking of wagers through any computer or communication device connected to the Internet or the use of Internet-based technology and other communication devices that are necessary for gaming operations. This includes the offering of online gambling games or wagering via online gambling platform outside the gaming area of a land-based casino;

k. *Online Gambling Platform* refers to the virtual venue or online channel developed to allow the registered players to remotely access, through the internet, the online gambling games. It may be web-based or accessed via a mobile application;

l. *Online Gambling Operator* refers to individual, corporation, or other private entity duly licensed by authorities to set-up and to operate an online gambling platform; and

m. *Personal Information* refers to any information whether recorded in a material form or not, from which the identity of an individual is apparent or can be reasonably and directly ascertained by the entity holding the information, or when put together with other information would directly and

certainly identify an individual as defined in Republic Act No. 10173 or the "Data Privacy Act of 2012".

n. *Regulatory Authorities* refer to PAGCOR, special economic zone authorities, Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), freeport authorities, and other pertinent government agencies authorized to issue license and regulate online gambling operators.

SEC. 4. *Regulatory Authorities.* – Only online gambling platforms duly licensed by the PAGCOR, special economic zone authorities, TIEZA, freeport authorities, and other pertinent government agencies, may host online gambling games, as defined under this Act, and accept wagers from bettors not prohibited under this Act. Such regulatory authorities are mandated to oversee the operations of online gambling operators and ensure their compliance to the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 5. *Registration of Online Gambling Operators.* – Only corporations duly registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), whose primary purpose refer to online gambling, may apply license from the regulatory authorities: as defined under Section 4: *Provided*, That foreign nationals may operate as an online gambling operator subject to compliance with the foreign ownership restrictions under Republic Act No. 7042 or the “Foreign Investments Acts of 1991”, as amended.

SEC. 6. *Prohibited Persons.* – The following persons are not allowed to participate in any online gambling games or activities:

- a. Persons below twenty-one (21) years of age are not allowed to register and access the online gambling platform. The online gambling operator shall implement effective measures to ensure the denial of access to individuals below twenty-one (21) years of age;
- b. Government officials and employees connected directly with the operation of the Government or any of its agencies;
- c. Member of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including the Army, Navy, Air Force or the Philippine National Police;
- d. Persons banned or excluded by an Exclusion Order in accordance with the provisions of this Act; and
- e. Any other persons prohibited to play or participate in any forms of gambling under other laws.

The online gambling platform shall ensure that the prohibited persons cannot access their website or platform. Failure to do so shall be considered as a violation of this Act.