

TWENTIETH CONGRESS)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Introduced by Representative Rufus B. Rodriguez and
Representative Maximo B. Rodriguez, Jr.*

House Bill No. **3169**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Online gambling has seen rapid proliferation in the Philippines in recent years. This has led to many Filipinos being now crippled by debt because of gambling. It has also led to serious social, economic, and criminal consequences, including addiction, financial distress, organized crime involvement, and the exploitation of vulnerable populations.

There are many stories of Filipinos who become addicted to gambling because of the ease at which they can place bets and because of the lure of winning big.

Research firm Capstone-Intel reported that with the rise of technology and the Internet, more people are turning to online betting as a form of entertainment and a potential source of income. Results of a survey they conducted in 2023 show that across the country, 64 percent of 1,200 respondents are engaged in online betting, with 66 percent of 18 to 40 year olds and 57 percent of 41 to 55 year olds saying they do gamble online.

Their survey also show that 39 percent who do online betting do so because they want to test their luck and 32 percent do it with the hopes of getting quick money.

Department of Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa has expressed his support for proposals seeking to either ban or strictly regulate online gambling, as he pointed out that addiction to it is a mental health issue and that an adverse effect of gambling is "habit forming".

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has sounded the alarm, calling it a "moral and social emergency.

This bill seeks to ban all forms of online gambling, whether operated within or outside Philippine territory but accessible to Filipinos, in order to protect public morals, welfare, and order.

In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this measure is earnestly requested.


RUFUS B. RODRIGUEZ


MAXIMO B. RODRIGUEZ, JR.

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AN ACT

BANNING ALL FORMS OF ONLINE GAMBLING IN THE PHILIPPINES AND IMPOSING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. Title. – This Act shall be known as the "Online Gambling Ban Act".

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to protect its citizens, especially minors and vulnerable sectors, from the harmful effects of gambling; maintain public order, decency, and morality; prevent the proliferation of illegal gambling operations using online platforms; and promote responsible digital use and financial well-being.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are defined as follows:

- a. Online Gambling refers to the placing of bets or wagers through the internet or other digital platforms, including mobile applications, in any contest, sporting event, or game of chance, skill, or a combination thereof with the expectation of winning money or anything of value;
- b. Operator refers to any person, entity, corporation, or group that manages, controls, or facilitates online gambling activities, whether based in the Philippines or abroad;
- c. Player refers to any person who participates, places bets, or wagers in any form of online gambling activity;
- d. Platform refers to any digital service, website, application, or network that enables or facilitates online gambling;
- e. Gambling Website refers to a website or application that offers any form of online gambling services, including betting or wagering activities;
- f. Internet Service Provider (ISP) refers to any entity that provides internet access to consumers, whether via broadband, fiber, satellite, or other means;
- g. Internet refers to an international or global computer network providing variety of information and communication facilities, consisting of interconnected networks using standardized communication protocols;
- h. Person - refers to an individual, partnership, corporation or any other business or legal entity.

SECTION 4. Prohibition. – It is unlawful for any person to commit any of the following acts:

- a. Issuing or causing to be issued, franchise, license, permit or any other form of authority to operate online gambling of any form;
- b. Holding, conducting, engaging, operating or maintaining online gambling of any form;
- c. Creating, operating or maintaining Online or Off-site betting platforms, mobile applications or websites for online gambling that allows users to place bets or wagers through phones, tablets, computers or similar instruments or gadgets;
- d. Online or Off-site placing, receiving or transmitting of bets or wagers in contest, sporting event, or game of chance streamed or broadcasted live from the place where such contest, sporting event, or game of chance is being held;
- e. Promoting or supporting online gambling;
- f. Providing in any manner and by any means the place, materials, equipment, or instruments needed or necessary for the conduct of any act or activity prohibited or declared illegal under this Act;
- g. Facilitating financial transactions related to online gambling
- h. Promoting, influencing through print media, social media, aiding, protecting or abetting the conduct or commission of any act or activity declared illegal and punishable under this Act; and

SECTION 5. Extraterritorial Application – This Act shall apply to all Filipinos and Philippine-based entities, regardless of location, and to foreign operators whose services are accessible within the Philippines.

SECTION 6. Violations of the provisions of this Act shall be punished by imprisonment and fine as follows:

- a. Issuing or causing to be issued, franchise, license, permit or other forms of authority to operate online gambling, and operating, maintaining, holding, conducting, or engaging in online gambling in any form shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than eight (8) years nor more than twelve (12) years and a fine of not less than One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00) nor more than Five Million Pesos (Php 5,000,000.00) at the discretion of the Court.
- b. Creating, operating or maintaining online or off-site betting platforms, mobile applications or websites for online gambling; and online or off site placing, receiving or transmitting of bets or wagers in contest, sporting event, or game of chance streamed or broadcasted live from the place where such contest, sporting event, or game of chance is being held shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than five (5) years nor more than eight (8) years and a fine of not less than Seven Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 700,000.00) nor more than One Million Pesos (Php 1,000,000.00) at the discretion of the Court.
- c. Promoting or supporting online gambling of any form; providing in any manner and by any means the place, materials, equipment, or instruments needed or necessary for the conduct of any act or activity prohibited or declared illegal under this Act;

and promoting, influencing, aiding, protecting or abetting the conduct of any act or activity declared illegal and punishable under this Act shall be punished by imprisonment of not less than three (3) years nor more than five (5) years and a fine of not less than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00) nor more than Seven Hundred Pesos (Php 700,000.00) at the discretion of the Court.

In case the prohibited act is committed by a corporation, the President, Vice President, Chairman of the Board, and Chief Operating Officer/General Manager of the corporation shall be held liable criminally for such act. In the case of a partnership, the managing partner shall be held criminally liable. In case of a single proprietorship, the owner-proprietor shall be held criminally liable.

In case the person liable for the violation is a foreign national, he shall, in addition to the penalty of imprisonment and fine imposed, be deported immediately after service of the penalty imposed and shall forever be barred from re-entering the Country.

Any person convicted for violation of any provision of this Act shall not be qualified for parole or probation.

SECTION 7. The National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) shall:

1. Block access to identified online gambling websites, applications, and domains;
2. Issue orders to internet service providers (ISPs) to suspend or terminate connections that allow access to such platforms;
3. Coordinate with the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center (CICC) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) for enforcement.

SECTION 8. All Internet Service Providers (ISPs) shall be required to block access to any online gambling websites that violate this Act. ISPs shall also cooperate with authorities in identifying individuals or entities operating illegal online gambling platforms.

SECTION 9. Information and Education Campaign. – The Department of Education (DepEd) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in coordination with the Department of Health (DOH), shall develop and implement a nationwide awareness program on the risks and consequences of online gambling.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DOJ, DILG, PNP, PAGCOR and other concerned government agencies, shall jointly promulgate the implementing rules and regulations as may be necessary to ensure the efficient and effective implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid and subsisting.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, issuance or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect thirty (30) days from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least in two (2) national newspapers of general

Approved,