

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

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
H.B. No. 3020



Introduced by Representative Harry L. Roque Jr.

AN ACT
REQUIRING THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION TO DEVELOP A SAFETY INTERNET
EDUCATION PROGRAM AND INCLUDE THIS IN THE CURRICULUM OF ALL
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 13 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.

It is acknowledged that the Internet, mobile phone, and other new digital technology are invaluable tools, critical to the ability of a nation to compete in a global economy; however, the easy, immediately accessible digital connections between individuals have also created safety problems for vulnerable sectors.

Internet users have grown exponentially in the past years; a large part of these users are minors. Statistics on American internet users showed that about 93 percent of youth ages 12 through 17 years are online and nearly 45 percent of children ages 3 to 11 years will use the Internet on a monthly basis in 2009. Eighty-nine percent of youth 13 through 19 years of age have a profile on social-networking sites. Meanwhile, US studies on the use of mobile phones

show that eighty percent of teens 13 through 17 years of age use cell phones, most of which have built-in cameras.

The Philippines has high internet penetration. In a joint study conducted by Nielsen Company Philippines and Yahoo! in 2008, it was found that Filipinos between 10 to 19 years are the top users of the Internet. As of March 2009, there are 20.65 million internet users in our country. As for the mobile phone, the Filipino youth have long been familiar with the device, with most of them owning a cell phone with built-in cameras.

A study conducted by the U.S. Congress on the internet and the youth, found that:

- The problem of online harassment or cyberbullying of youth by other youths is widespread, and results in a range of children's experiences from minor irritation to severe emotional harm. The Bureau of Justice Statistics has found that online harassment tends to begin in third and fourth grade, peaks in seventh and eighth grade, and continues in reduced amounts throughout high school, college, and professional schools.
- Young people face greater risks in the form of electronic aggression and sexual solicitation from other young people known to them than from strangers.
- Gang members increasingly are using the Internet as a recruitment tool to entice would-be members and as an intimidation tool to threaten rival gangs. Gang members use the Internet in particular to promote their message.
- The pervasive digital image and video capture devices play a role in cases of harassment of youth by other youth and youth production of problematic content.
- Most elementary and secondary school educators have received little or no professional development training on Internet safety. As a result, many students

receive little or no education on safe, responsible, and ethical use of Internet and other new media.

- The widespread use of the Internet, cell phones, interactive gaming, and other electronic communication devices by children both inside and outside of school suggest that acceptable use policies and filtering alone cannot resolve Internet safety concerns, and that a greater focus on education would be beneficial.
- According to an empirical study of 1,379 fourth grade students in Virginia, the first State to mandate Internet safety education in its schools, the students improved their responses to 8 of 10 questions after completing an Internet safety education program, especially in major areas, uncomfortable content and cyberbullying.

This bill proposes a comprehensive program which shall include mandatory Internet safety education for all students, in order to resolve and prevent the problems and dangers relating to misuse of the Internet and other new media.¹



HARRY L. ROQUE JR.

¹ This bill was originally filed in the Fourteenth Congress, Third Regular Session, and refiled by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago in the Sixteenth Congress, Third Regular Session.

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*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 “Safety Internet Education
2 Act.”

3 SECTION 2. *Definition of Terms.* – For purposes of this Act, the term:

4 A. “DepED” means the Department of Education;

5 B. “Internet Safety Education Program” means an age-appropriate, research-based
6 program that encourages safe, ethical, and responsible use of the Internet, promotes an informed,
7 critical understanding of the Internet, and educates children and communities about how to
8 prevent or respond to problems or dangers related to the internet or new media;

9 C. “New Media”

10 (1) means emerging digital, computerized, or networked information and
11 communication technologies that often have interactive capabilities; and

12 (2) includes e-mail, instant messaging, text messaging, web sites, blogs,
13 interactive gaming, social media, cell phones, and mobile devices; and

1 D. "Secretary" means the Secretary of the Department of Education;

2 SECTION 3. *Incorporation of an Internet Safety Education Program in the curriculum of*
3 *Public and Private Secondary Schools.* – A course on Internet Safety Education shall be
4 incorporated in the curriculum of both public and private elementary and secondary schools.

5 SECTION 4. *Implementing Agency and its duties.* –

6 A. The DepEd shall:

7 (1) identify, develop, and implement Internet safety education programs,
8 including educational technology, multimedia and interactive applications, online
9 resources, and lesson plans;

10 (2) provide professional training to elementary and secondary teachers,
11 administrators, and other staff on Internet safety and new media literacy;

12 (3) develop online-risk prevention programs for children;

13 (4) train and support peer-driven Internet safety education initiatives;

14 (5) coordinate and fund research initiatives that investigate online risks to children
15 and Internet safety education;

16 (6) develop and implement public education campaigns to promote awareness of
17 online risks to children and Internet safety education;

18 (7) educate parents about teaching their children how to use the Internet and new
19 media safely, responsibly, and ethically and help parents identify and protect their
20 children from risks relating to use of the Internet and new media; or

21 B. The DepEd Secretary shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act,
22 promulgate rules and regulations, including those of disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce

1 the provisions of this Act. Further, the DepEd shall be the lead agency in the carrying out the
2 following: Secretary is hereby authorized and directed to adopt a system to implement and
3 carryout the provisions of this Act.

4 SECTION 5. *Appropriation.* – To carry out the provisions of this Act, such amount as
5 may be necessary is hereby authorized to be appropriated from the National Treasury.
6 Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continuous operation of this program shall be included
7 in the annual appropriation of the DepED.

8 SECTION 6. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or
9 unconstitutional, the same shall not affect the validity and effectivity of the other provisions
10 hereof.

11 SECTION 7. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders, and issuances, or portions
12 thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or
13 modified accordingly.

14 SECTION 8. *Effectivity Clause.* –This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
15 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,