



SENATE
S. No. 129

'19 JUL -2 A9:03

Introduced by Senator Grace Poe

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**AN ACT
INCORPORATING THE VALUE OF RESPONSIBLE, FAIR AND TRUTHFUL
USAGE AND ENJOYMENT OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN SCHOOLS
AND UNIVERSITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Explanatory Note

According to "Digital 2019", a report from Hootsuite and We are Social showing people's online behavior around the world, ***Filipinos spend an average of 10:02 hours a day on the internet*** using any device.¹

Digital 2019 further revealed the following: (a) social media penetration in the country is at 71%, above the worldwide average of 45%; (b) ***79 million Filipinos aged 13 and older are on social media***; (c) social media grew in the country by 13%, with more than 9 million users added since January 2018; and (d) ***Filipinos spent the most time on social media at 4 hours and 12 minutes on average per day***.

The internet penetration in the Philippines, as well as the above-mentioned numbers, will surely continue to rise in the next years to come thereby truly making the worldwide web and/or social media a bigger, accessible and influential forum/marketplace of ideas leading to a more participative citizenry and/or democracy. Simply put, the influence of Social Media and the continuous increase of its users/subscribers are unavoidable.

Given the above phenomenon or trend, the "prime duty" of the Government **"to serve and protect the people"** (Section 4, Article 2 of the Constitution) must also cope up. In accordance with the Constitution's mandate that government shall **give priority to education, among others, to foster patriotism and nationalism**, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development (Section 17, Article 2), consideration must also be accorded to the rise of Social Media as the State also ought to recognize the **vital role of communication and information in nation-building** (Section 24, Article 2).

¹ <https://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2019/02/01/2019-digital-hootsuite-we-are-social-internet-philippines-facebook.html>

In keeping with the above-enumerated constitutionally-enshrined duties of the State, this legislative measure seeks the inclusion of the importance of Social Media, how it effectively and efficiently disseminates information and shapes public discourse and issues, into the curriculum of primary and secondary levels of education in the country.

Moreover, as the State ought to maintain its respect for the freedom of speech and expression and should never censor or silence the people, this bill, instead, seeks to inculcate in our students and/or the youth the virtues of discernment and critical thinking in the face of the emergence of what has been labeled as "fake news". This bill seeks to insulate the citizenry from attempts to unscrupulously utilize Social Media for various kinds of black propaganda and misinformation which are detrimental to transparency, accountability and truthfulness which could frustrate a meaningful, fruitful and intelligent discourse towards nation-building.

Aside from the inclusion of Social Media in the curriculum of primary and secondary education, this bill has the following highlights:

1. Corporations shall be mandated to promote responsible usage of Social Media as part of their respective Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and ensure that the same shall likewise be observed and practiced by their officials and employees; and
2. Social Media education and/or mentorship shall be made part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP).

In view of the foregoing, this legislative measure's immediate enactment into a law is hereby earnestly sought.


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

1 Sec. 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the "*Social Media Awareness in*
2 *Schools and Universities Act of 2019*".

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State has constitutionally-declared policies
4 to serve and protect the people, to give priority to education to foster patriotism and
5 nationalism and to recognize the vital role of communication and information in
6 nation-building. Towards this end, it is the objective of this Act to cope up with the
7 mercurial rise of the influence and prevalence of use of Social Media by inculcating
8 onto the youth and/or students the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in
9 their unavoidable daily immersion in Social Media.

10 Sec. 3. *Inclusion of Social Media in the Curricula for Primary and Secondary*
11 *Education.* – Social Media awareness shall be part of the curriculum for both primary
12 and secondary education, in public and private schools, with the following
13 objectives:

- 14 a. Inculcate how various types of Social Media aid in the effective and
15 efficient dissemination of information;
16 b. Inculcate how Social Media helps in shaping public discourse and
17 opinion;

- c. Inculcate how Social Media helps in fostering a more participative democracy;
- d. Inculcate the importance of upholding truth and the veracity of facts, figures and events in Social Media;
- e. Inculcate responsible and fair use of Social Media; and
- f. Inculcate the virtues of discernment and critical-thinking in the use and/or enjoyment of Social Media.

The Department of Education (DepEd), in consultation with the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), shall immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.

Sec. 4. Social Media Awareness as part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP). – Social Media awareness must be made part of the National Service Training Program (NSTP), particularly in the service components pertaining to the Literacy Training Service (LTS) and the Civic Welfare Training Service (CWTS).

The Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), in consultation with the DICT, shall immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.

Sec. 5. Contribution of the Private Sector in Social Media Awareness. – Private corporations must formulate and implement effective measures and/or policies in relation to the responsible, fair and truthful utilization and/or enjoyment of various types of Social Media. Private corporations must likewise promote the foregoing as part of their respective Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), in consultation with the DICT, shall immediately formulate the necessary steps and measures to achieve the objectives of this Section.

Sec. 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The DepEd, CHED, SEC, in consultation with the DICT, shall have the joint responsibility for the adoption of the implementing rules of this Act within sixty (60) days from the approval of this Act.

Sec. 7. Separability Clause. – If any section or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

1 Sec. 8. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in two (2) newspapers of national circulation.

Approved.