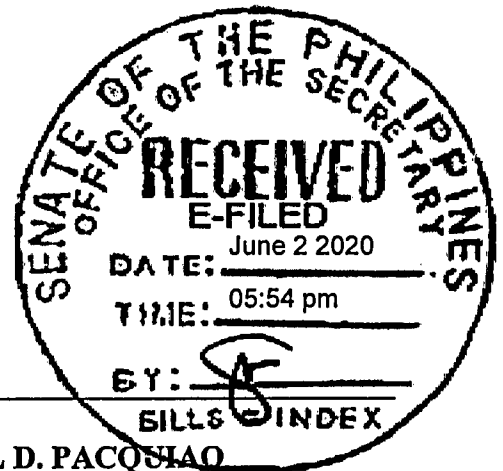


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

SENATE
S.B. No. 1580



INTRODUCED BY: SENATOR EMMANUEL D. PACOSIAO

AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 11469 TO ADDITIONALLY ADDRESS
INTERNET CONGESTION AND HOME AND MOBILE COMMUNICATION
UNIT PROBLEMS IN THE COUNTRY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The continuing experience and effects in the Philippines of the worldwide pandemic caused by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus that is known for short as “Covid-19” has forced changes on the behaviour of Filipinos. The contagion has compelled individuals to limit face-to-face interaction to an “only-necessary” minimum.

The realization of the danger of person-to-person infection and the confirmation in the country of community transmission of the disease has constrained the populace to make a significant additional resort to the use of the internet and also of home and mobile communication units for day-to-day activities.

To mitigate the disruption of work activities and to minimize its impact on the economy, the alternative mode of doing work from home is increasingly being adopted. To continue contracts and perform commercial and other transactions, including the offer and purchase of basic provisions, individual parties have resorted to remote negotiation and execution.

With the avoidance of in-person contact, distance communication is now in greater use for casual messaging, convening meetings, and even conducting conferences and seminars or “webinars”. The celebration of religious services, and of milestones of families and acquaintances, and even the consoling of bereavement and witnessing of wakes and interment are going online.

Presently, the importance of continuing the education and schooling of students is requiring government, academic institutions, and leaders in the academe to reformat and design hybrid methods of learning that will use synchronized and asynchronous instruction, but avoiding in-school visits and face-to-face teaching.

All of these activities, in varying but significant degrees require access to the internet and increasing use of home and mobile communication units.

Yet, Filipino internet users and home and mobile communication unit users have, even long before the occurrence of the pandemic, experienced the adverse effects and complained of internet congestion, lagging or dropping of connections, high saturation of cell and transmission/relay sites, insufficiency of area coverage, and the lack of reasonable and appropriate plans and platforms to address even the erstwhile needs.

With the increase in reliance to internet access and to the use of home and mobile communication units, there is now an urgent need to address the above recognized problems.

This bill will seek to institute measures that can enable, support and improve the effectiveness of the new normal behavior of Filipinos. This bill shall provide the necessary supplement to minimize and eventually stop the spread of the disease caused by the Covid-19 virus. This bill may also serve as a model for necessary action to address future epidemics, and may even remediate day-to-day communication problems of our countrymen.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

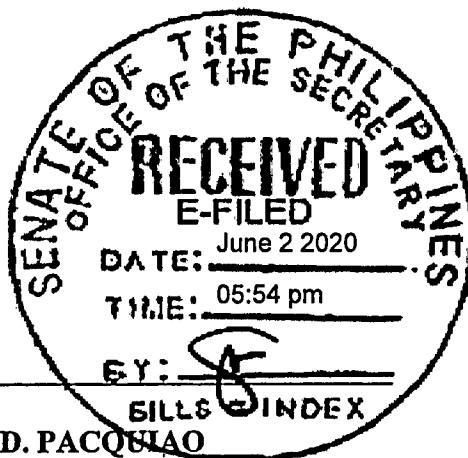
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO', written in a stylized, cursive script.

EMMANUEL D. PACQUIAO

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

1 Section 1. Republic Act No. 11469, otherwise known as the “Bayanihan to Heal as One
2 Act shall be amended as hereunder provided.

3 Section 2. Section 3 R. A. No. 11469, shall be amended by inserting a subparagraph (e-1)
4 following subparagraph (e), which new subparagraph shall read as follows:

5 “.....; (e-1) for the government to undertake measures in partnership with
6 appropriate internet and communication service providers to address internet
7 congestion, lagging or dropping of connections, high saturation of cell and
8 transmission/relay sites, insufficiency of area coverage, and the lack of reasonable
9 and appropriate plans and platforms in order to sufficiently meet the significant
10 additional shift of the general public to online services and platforms and to home
11 and mobile communication units for doing work from home, for completing
12 commercial and other transactions, for convening meetings and conducting
13 conferences and seminars/webinars, and for obtaining educational instruction;
14”

15 Section 3. The present subparagraph (ee) of Section 4 of R. A. No. 11469 shall be re-
16 designated as subparagraph (ff), and a new subparagraph (ee) shall be inserted in its place to read
17 as follows:

18 “(ee) Regulate providers of internet services and communication services
19 and direct the Department of Information and Communication Technology
20 (DICT) to work with internet service and communication service providers in

1 undertaking reasonable measures to immediately address the internet congestion,
2 lagging or dropping of connections, high saturation of cell and transmission/relay
3 sites, insufficiency of area coverage, and the lack of reasonable and appropriate
4 plans and platforms to sufficiently meet the significant additional shift of the
5 general public to online services and platforms and to home and mobile
6 communication units for performing alternative work from home, for remotely
7 negotiating and executing commercial and other transactions including but not
8 limited to the purchase and delivery of day-to-day provisions, for convening
9 meetings and conducting conferences and seminars/webinars, and for obtaining
10 educational instruction, and doing other necessary activities, and effectively
11 support the new normal behavior in the country;”

12 **Section 4. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or
13 otherwise invalid, the validity of the other provisions hereof shall not be affected.

14 **Section 20. *Effectivity.*** This shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in at least
15 two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

16
17 Approved,