



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

'17 JAN 12 P3:06

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SENATE

P. S. RES. NO. 259

Introduced by Senator Antonio "Sonny" F. Trillanes IV

RESOLUTION

URGING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INFORMATION AND MASS MEDIA, AND OTHER APPROPRIATE COMMITTEE/S TO CONDUCT AN INQUIRY, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE MASSIVE PROLIFERATION OF FALSE, ERROENOUS, DISTORTED, FABRICATED AND/OR MISLEADING NEWS AND INFORMATION ON SOCIAL MEDIA AS WELL AS ON THE SO CALLED *SOCIAL MEDIA TROLLS*, IN ORDER TO COME UP WITH REMEDIAL LEGISLATION TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM MANIPULATION THROUGH THE SPREAD OF FALSE, ERROUNEOUS, DISTORTED, FABRICATED AND/OR MISLEADING NEWS AND INFORMATION, WITH THE END IN VIEW OF COMING UP WITH A VIABLE SYSTEM TO HOLD THE AUTHORS, DISTRIBUTORS AND/OR PURVEYORS OF THE SAME RESPONSIBLE AND ACCOUNTABLE UNDER THE LAW FOR THE CONTENTS THEY GENERATE AND/OR DISSEMINATE

WHEREAS, according to the Asia Digital Marketing Association (ADMA) and the Internet World statistics, the Philippines has 44.2 million internet users, ranking second highest in Southeast Asia, and sixth in the entire Asia.¹

WHEREAS, today, almost half of the Philippine population have access to internet, compared to 2013 data which recorded only 30% of Filipinos having internet access.²

WHEREAS, over 40% of Filipinos have active social media accounts, larger than that of technologically advanced countries like Japan and South Korea. Moreover, Filipinos use social media as a source news and information on a daily basis.³

¹ Revesencio, J. (4 May 2016). Philippines: A Digital Lifestyle Capital in the Making? Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonha-revesencio/philippines-a-digital-lif_1_b_7199924.html

² Paurom D., Mangosing F., & Corrales N. (25 November 2015). Social media and the 2016 national elections. Retrieved from <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/742458/social-media-and-the-2016-national-elections>

³ Revesencio, J. (4 May 2016). Philippines: A Digital Lifestyle Capital in the Making? Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jonha-revesencio/philippines-a-digital-lif_1_b_7199924.html

WHEREAS, the May 2016 National and Local Elections highlighted the potent potential and power of the social media in the conduct of electoral campaigns and in setting the tone and topics of political discussion.

WHEREAS, social media has been taunted to be the *game-changer* in recent Philippine elections, where everyone had the power to voice out their ideas and create a thread of reactionary discussions.⁴

WHEREAS, recently, instead of being a tool for empowerment, the social media has become a platform for political propaganda, deceit and manipulation, which has been continually abused and misused for the sake of personal or political agenda, at the expense of rational discourse and discussion with the proliferation of the so called "*social media trolls*".

WHEREAS, a social media troll, whose identity is usually anonymous, is someone who deliberately creates and/or foments discord and conflict on social media sites through the posting of controversial and inflammatory messages to provoke emotional responses from other internet users and take the focus away from the rational and meaningful discussion of the subject at hand.⁵

WHEREAS, because of social media trolls, the social media is now being used to create fabricated realities through a network of fake social media accounts intended for trolling and spreading of erroneous and misleading news and information.

WHEREAS, these social media trolls are creating a culture of impunity online by using foul and uncensored language, and personal attacks like death threats and rape threats.⁶

WHEREAS, social media trolling is becoming a source of living where one can allegedly earn up to \$2,000 a month for creating fake accounts and using them to manipulate social media content and discourse.⁷

WHEREAS, these social media trolls are also responsible for creating and spreading false and misleading news and information to build a sense of popularity or dissent for a particular person, idea or cause⁸, with no existing and viable system to hold them accountable for their actions.

⁴ Dangla, D. (23 April 2016). How social media is shaping the 2016 elections. Retrieved from <http://news.abs-cbn.com/halalan2016/focus/04/22/16/how-social-media-is-shaping-the-2016-elections>

⁵ Bourque, A. (05 February 2015). Answering a Social Troll - What You Need to Know. Retrieved from http://www.huffingtonpost.com/andre-bourque/answering-a-social-troll_b_6625654.html

⁶ Marasigan, C. (15 April 2016). How Rodrigo Duterte Hacked the Internet. Retrieved from <http://www.stack.com.ph/how-rodrigo-duterte-hacked-the-internet/>

⁷ Williams, S. (04 January 2017). Rodrigo Duterte's Army of Online Trolls. Retrieved from <https://newrepublic.com/article/138952/rodrigo-dutertes-army-online-trolls>

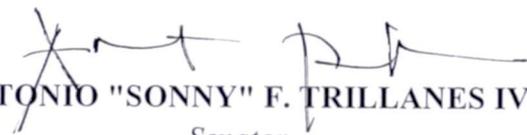
⁸ Ibid.

WHEREAS, the spread of false, erroneous, distorted, fabricated and/or misleading news and information by these social media trolls threatens the viability and credibility of online journalism, with internet users having few mechanisms to filter news sources.⁹

WHEREAS, in view of all of the foregoing, there is an immediate and imperative need to investigate the proliferation of online social media trolls and the spread of false, erroneous, distorted, fabricated and/or misleading news and information on social media as it threatens not only the viability and credibility of online journalism but also violates every citizen's right to truthful and accurate online news and information.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, *as it is hereby resolved by the Philippines Senate*, to direct the Senate Committee on Public Information and Mass Media, and other appropriate committee/s to conduct an inquiry, in aid of legislation, on the massive proliferation of false, erroneous, distorted, fabricated and/or misleading news and information on social media, as well as on the so called *social media trolls*, in order to come up with remedial legislation to protect the public from manipulation through the spread of false, erroneous, distorted, fabricated and/or misleading news and information, with the end in view of coming up with a viable system to hold the authors, distributors and/or purveyors of the same responsible and/or accountable under the law for the contents they generate and/or disseminate, to protect the right of the public to truthful and accurate news and information.

Adopted,


ANTONIO "SONNY" F. TRILLANES IV
Senator

⁹ Thompson, M. (16 December 2016). In a world of fake news, real journalism must be paid for. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/dec/16/fake-news-journalism-digital>