

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
First Regular Session

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'22 JUL 13 P2 :02

SENATE
S.B. NO. 503

RECEIVED BY 

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

AN ACT
DIGITIZING ALL BOOKS NECESSARY FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION AND
ESTABLISHING THE PHILIPPINE ONLINE LIBRARY, PROVIDING FUNDS
THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift of many sectors to the digital realm. Given the need to minimize face-to-face transactions and limit public gathering, businesses and government offices have implemented online services and digital payments. Medical consultations and appointments with health professionals also transitioned to teleconferencing, as travel restrictions and the continuing threat of contracting the disease in public transport persist.

The same is true on the education front. Traditional classroom learning moved to online meetings and video conferences. Before, our teachers were using green blackboards on which they write the day's lessons. But today, they use green backgrounds for their online classes. While they used to wield chalk and pens, they now have internet connection and electronic devices as potent weapons of instruction.

The New Normal indicates that this online method of learning is here to stay. There is therefore a need to complement this evolution with a similar shift in terms of available learning materials and references. This bill aims to establish the Philippine Online Library which will house the digitized copy of all textbooks and reference books necessary for the intensified public education of our elementary and secondary

students. It envisions an entire library of essential reading materials at the children's fingertips, and easy access to a treasure trove of Filipino literature.

The creation of this online facility is also a step in the direction taken by the youth who spend much of their time online and on their mobile phones. While they are at it, we follow their lead and bring the educational materials to where they are. By employing the technology they enjoy using and engaging the habits they currently have, we can encourage them to read and study.

This measure can also be seen as a viable and cost-effective option against brick and mortar libraries which take many months and even more resources to build and operate. Moreover, as efforts are underway to improve internet services and connect communities through a national digital landscape, it is hoped that online libraries, with its promise of education and empowerment, will be able to reach every young mind, including those from farthest barrios and remote villages.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is highly recommended.

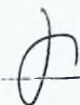

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Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

1 Section 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Philippine Online Library*
2 *Act of 2022.*”

3 Sec. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It shall be the policy of the State to ensure that
4 its citizens are computer literate and are provided access to an increasingly digitized
5 world. Thus, the State shall provide its citizens with the opportunity to increase their
6 adaptability with information and communications technology, and to enhance their
7 learning experience by providing access to digitized copies of textbooks necessary for
8 the provision of quality primary and secondary education.

9 Sec. 3. *Philippine Online Library.*– The Department of Education (DepEd) shall
10 create a digitized copy of all textbooks and reference books it deems necessary for
11 the public education of Philippine elementary and secondary students. This shall be
12 compiled in the Philippine Online Library which shall be jointly managed by the
13 Department of Education and the Department of Information and Communication
14 Technology.

15 Sec. 4. *Provision for Access to the Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* --
16 The Department of Education shall ensure access to the digitized copies of textbooks

1 by providing computers, laptops or appropriate wherewithal to all primary and
2 secondary public schools nationwide. Similarly, in order to ensure access to the
3 digitized copies of textbooks, the Department of Information and Communications
4 Technology shall provide fast and reliable internet access to each primary and
5 secondary public school.

6 *Sec. 5. Recycling of Computers.* – In order to offset expenses related to the
7 procurement of computers, laptops or appropriate wherewithal necessary for the
8 immediate execution of the provisions of this Act, national government agencies,
9 government-owned and controlled corporations, and other government financial
10 institutions which shall procure new computers shall endorse their old units to the
11 Department of Information and Communications Technology to check if the computers
12 can still be used for the intent of this Act and afterwards shall be given to the
13 Department of Education for deployment to primary and secondary public schools
14 nationwide.

15 *Sec. 6. Additional Online Educational Materials.* – The Department of Education
16 can tap the National Library of the Philippines to complement the Philippine Online
17 Library's digital repository of textbooks with additional materials that are
18 representative of Filipino culture and literature. DepEd shall also be allowed to add
19 other online materials that it deems necessary for expanding the learning opportunities
20 for students.

21 *Sec. 7. Custody over Digitized Copies of Textbooks.* – The Department of
22 Education and the National Library of the Philippines shall have joint custody over the
23 digitized copies of the textbooks. The Department of Information and Communications
24 Technology shall likewise ensure the technological management of the digital
25 repository to ensure the integrity of the system.

26 *Sec. 8. Appropriations.* – The initial amount of Five Hundred Million (Php
27 500,000,000.00) shall be appropriated for the immediate implementation of this Act
28 and shall be jointly managed by the Department of Education and Department of
29 Information and Communications Technology. An annual budget of One Hundred
30 Million (Php 100,000,000.00) will be included in the annual budget of the Department
31 of Education to make sure that the equipment and internet connection of public
32 schools for the purpose of this Act will be maintained.

1 *Sec. 9. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Department of Education,
2 the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and the National
3 Library of the Philippines shall have joint responsibility over the formulation of the
4 Implementing Rules and Regulations necessary for the effective execution and
5 enforcement of this Act. They shall do so in close coordination with the Department
6 of Science and Technology, and other stakeholders. The Implementing Rules and
7 Regulations shall be released within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act.

8 *Sec. 10. Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any part, section, or provisions
9 of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions not affected
10 thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

11 *Sec. 11. Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
12 rules and regulations, and parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of
13 this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

14 *Sec. 12. Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following
15 the completion of its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2)
16 newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,