EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State, under Article II, Section 24 of the 1987 Constitution, “recognizes the vital role of communication and information in nation-building.” Meanwhile, under Section 17 of the same Article, the State vows to prioritize education and science and technology, “to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development.” Connecting these two provisions is Article XIII, Section 2(1), under which the State is mandated to “[e]stablish, maintain, and support a complete, adequate, and integrated system of education relevant to the needs of the people and society.”

One application of this is the attention given to deepening our understanding of the different types of literacy that we have to help our students develop:1

Per Literacy Statistics, Functional Literacy, Education and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) of 2013, 96.5 percent of Filipinos were literate, an improvement from 95.6 percent in 2008. Almost all Filipinos ten years old and above were basically literate, while nine out of ten Filipinos 10 to 64 years of age were functionally literate. At least in terms of reading, writing and comprehending, Filipinos have come a long way. But as we may all know, we are in an era of rapid change. The age of Web 2.0 continues to thrive and Filipinos have embraced it wholeheartedly. We know that we have been once called the social media capital of the world, with every study on the matter ranking the Philippines as among the top countries spending the most hours on social media platforms.

As these advancements widen their reach on our soil, the dangers they entail also spread like wildfire, and their worst target is the youth. According to the DQ Institute, an average Filipino child now spends 34 hours in front of digital screens every week, two hours higher than the global average of 32 hours. While this happens, 73 percent of our children are exposed to cyber-bullying, inappropriate active searches, gaming addiction, meeting strangers online, online sexual content, inappropriate adult images and inappropriate sexual

talking. Filipino children have become increasingly vulnerable online and such problem requires us to know more about what we're dealing with. There is a need to spread a new kind of literacy.

Enter the establishment of Media and Information Education as a necessary component of our primary and secondary curricula:

Media literacy, declares the National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE), “represents a necessary, inevitable, and realistic response (underscoring ours) to the complex, ever-changing” electronic and communication environment that has become part of the lives of millions all over the planet.

Responsible citizenship requires citizens in a democracy not only to access but also to understand and to be critical of the billions of words, bytes and images—the totality of information—that the media disseminate daily through print, broadcast, moving pictures, and the Internet. The interactivity made possible by the new electronic media has made this an even more crucial imperative not only for responsible citizenship and responsible communication, but also for the development of every human being in society.

“Today's information and entertainment technologies,” continues NAMLE, “communicate to us through a powerful combination of words, images, and sounds. As such, we need to develop a wider set of literacy skills helping us to both comprehend the messages we receive and effectively utilize these tools to design and distribute our own messages.”

Being media literate thus “requires critical thinking skills that empower us as we make decisions, whether in the classroom, the living room, the workplace, the boardroom, or the voting booth.”

However, media literacy enables the individual not only to be critical of the media but also to create messages appropriate to each medium. In the Philippine context, media literacy is also a long-term solution to the many problems and issues that afflict the Philippine media, in that a media literate public aware of the role, values and standards of the media can demand that the media adhere to their own standards as a necessary condition to improving their capacity to provide the public the information it needs.

These standards the media themselves disseminate through codes of ethics and professional guidelines with which media organizations encourage compliance. These standards are meant to assure that media practitioners—who today include ordinary citizens who access the Internet and its various platforms of expression to make their views known on various matters including issues and events of public concern—are able to provide accurate, relevant, and fair reports, analysis and opinion to the billions of individuals who read newspapers, listen to the radio, view television and motion pictures, and access the Internet.

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² Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, “Why Media Literacy?,” available at https://cmfr-phil.org/media-literacy/what-is-media-literacy/?__cf_chl_jschl_tk__=135143fb5a99b5473da3e051c737775f9e1e7cc2-1600011205-0-AQHnaiCBz9CKk5PbXnuCzwQostadShbo03EzCL-praC3mNK2ePLQJfp1oxjBipp-TSOe12deoYckh_A56D6kvi8HixUyPhrEornynSS8vsUL8eRQp7Ntb6UkDmU0IxEjwSCu1gQXR58YgghZcbtGW4-RmJ3hedgwdZe62MKnEBaDe4CjFsgUGoNQRigtvVOjFDPUvUtAHSEUhgBLthMcVHEBNhJy hRPPGlr-jbcWd5M7jc6F1dVaZ628UI-E7HoY7QAI1CyiRq2oQp2g0IsC-rI0Qgqxb79PIMsnfSe3YS2uk3OscNqS4isMcPQ.
This bill is offered as a way to give students a responsive and structured way hone their Media and Information Literacy. This Bill aims to ensure that all students in Grades 1 to 12 shall receive sufficient instruction in this field, to equip them with the skills and understanding that they will need to (1) protect themselves, their community, and by extension, the nation, from fake news and (2) contribute to the enrichment of knowledgeable/informed discussion online, especially on national issues, as responsible citizens.

It is for the foregoing premises that the approval of this Bill is earnestly sought.

ALFRED C. DELOS SANTOS
Representative, Ang Probinsyano Party-List
AN ACT
MANDATING ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY
SCHOOLS TO INCLUDE MEDIA AND INFORMATION EDUCATION,
INCLUDING THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF THE INTERNET, IN THEIR
CURRICULUM, FOR OTHER PURPOSES, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS
THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “Media and
Information Education Act.”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to
broaden the understanding of its people of all forms of media and upheave
the capacity of its citizenry to identify reliable information from various media
platforms.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. –

a) Media. – The wide array of modern communications such as
television, cinema, video, radio, photography, advertising,
newspapers, magazines, recorded music, and the internet;

b) Media and Information Education. – Systemic instruction on the
right of every citizen to understand how media operates in societies,
to learn critical analysis and reflection on information presented by
the different forms of media, to information itself, and to practice
freedom of expression on or through various media platforms.³

c) Internet. – An electronic communications network that connects computer networks and organizational computer facilities around the world.\(^4\)

d) Social Media. – Forms of electronic communication through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content.\(^5\)

SECTION 4. Coverage. – All students from grade level one (1) to grade level twelve (12), from both public and private schools.

SECTION 5. Curriculum Development. – The Department of Education, in close coordination with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, and after thorough consultation with media experts and practitioners, shall develop a module for the inclusion of Media and Information Education and guidelines on the responsible use of the internet in the curriculum of primary and secondary schools.

The modules shall include the following topics, but should not be limited to:

a) History and Development of Media;

b) Types and Forms of Media;

c) Critical Information Analysis;

d) Responsible Information Dissemination;

e) Understanding Technology and Social Media Security Systems; and

f) The Data Privacy Act, as well as the Cybercrime Prevention Act of 2012.

SECTION 6. Curriculum Review. – The Department of Education shall review all existing curricula that already include media information education and responsible use of the internet and amend the same, if necessary, to align them with the provisions stated in this Act. Furthermore, all such curricula shall cohere to Section 4 of this Act and shall be reviewed every two (2) years to ensure their relevance.

SECTION 7. Appropriations. – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, such declaration shall not invalidate other parts thereof which shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees or issuances, letters of instruction, administrative orders, rules, and


regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,