

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7689



Introduced by **REPRESENTATIVE RICARDO S. CRUZ, JR.**

AN ACT PROHIBITING ONLINE GAMBLING, PENALIZING THE PLACING OF WAGERS OR BETS THROUGH THE INTERNET OR ANY FORM OF ONLINE GAMBLING ACTIVITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

While Filipino workers continue to struggle for their families' needs, online gambling operators still prey on their desperation. The lure of gambling on the internet makes it especially enticing for our fellow citizens, who desperately hope to win large sums of money. However, those engaging in such activities face a number of risks and issues due to money. The internet only amplifies this risk, giving people practically unlimited access to betting.

Online gambling platforms such as e-sabong, have been linked to the destruction of the nation's moral fabric. While it has been a way for the government to generate income, this should not come at the cost of endangering our people, let alone minors, with activities that bring about addictive behavior as well as an increase of mental health and financial problems, vices, and crime rates.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has consistently warned that addictive behaviors, like gambling, have devastating effects on individuals, families and their communities and have enormous socioeconomic impacts at national and global levels. There have even been cases of desperate parents selling their children or committing suicide over debts from e-sabong. Easier access to gambling through online platforms has only exacerbated this.¹ In a TeleRadyo interview, 20-year-old John Robin Manalili said he wanted to quit e-sabong for his parents but ended up losing up to Php 1 million to his addiction.²

¹<https://www.who.int/teams/mental-health-and-substance-use/alcohol-drugs-and-addictive-behaviours/ad-ab-forum>

²<https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/03/03/22/binatang-natalo-ng-p1-m-sa-e-sabong-tinalikuran-ang-bi-syo-para-sa-magulang>

In addition to financial harm, evidence suggests a link between gambling and mental health problems such as depression and anxiety. Further research also shows correlations between substance use disorders and problem gambling.³ Criminal activity can also be a result of compulsive betting since gamblers will often resort to crime in order to maintain appearances or pay off debts.

It is our moral obligation to preserve the morals which define us as a society. Most importantly, it is our duty as those who believe in God to raise the next generation in a morally solid setting and guard them against the harms and risks that accompany gambling, avarice, and other sinful activities.

For these reasons, the swift passage of the foregoing measure is earnestly sought.



Hon. Ricardo “Ading” S. Cruz, Jr.
Representative
1st District, Taguig-Pateros

³<https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/substance-use/the-epidemiology-and-impact-of-gambling-disorder-and-other-gambling-relate-harm.pdf>

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Anti-Online Gambling Act*”.

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to promote a just and dynamic social order that will ensure the prosperity and independence of the nation. Through policies that provide adequate social services, promote full employment, and a commitment to create economic opportunities, the State shall free the people from poverty.

The 1987 Constitution states that workers shall be entitled to security of tenure, humane conditions of work, and a living wage. They have the right to be treated with dignity. Towards this end, the State shall adopt measures to eliminate and prohibit all forms of online gambling activities as it undermines the value of an individual’s dignified work by allowing reckless and risky expenditures at the possibility of instant monetary gain which have led many Filipinos to experience dire financial situations.

SECTION 3. Definition of Terms. – For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined as follows:

- a.) “Internet” refers to an international computer network of interoperable packet switched data networks. It includes the electronic medium in which online communication takes place.
- b.) “Bet” or “Wager” refers to taking or risking by any person of something of value upon the outcome of a contest of others, a sporting event, or a game subject to chance, upon an agreement or understanding that the person or another person will receive something of value in the event of a certain outcome.

- c.) “Internet Gambling” or “Online Gambling” refers to placing, receiving, or otherwise knowingly transmitting a bet or wager by any means which involves the use, at least in part, of the Internet.

SECTION 4. Prohibition on Online Gambling and similar acts. – Any person who shall place, receive, or otherwise knowingly transmit a bet or wager by any means which involves the use, at least in part, of the internet, shall be punished by an imprisonment ranging from one (1) month to six (6) months or a fine of not less than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 100,000.00) nor more than Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00) at the discretion of the court.

If the offender is a corporation or association, the maximum penalty of five (5) years and the fine of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php 500,000.00) shall be imposed upon the President, Director, Manager or Managing partners thereof.

If the offender is a public officer or employee, or if a public officer or employee promotes or encourages online gambling, the maximum penalty prescribed for the offense shall be imposed and, in addition, he shall be dismissed from the public service and perpetually disqualified from holding any public office, to vote and to participate in any election.

SECTION 5. Repeal of Authority to Regulate Online Gambling. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, which are interpreted to give legal authority to regulate any forms of online gambling are hereby repealed.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within thirty (30) days from the approval of this Act, the Secretary of Interior Local Government and the Secretary of Justice shall jointly promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this measure.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof contrary to, or inconsistent with this Act are hereby modified or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,