

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

First Regular Session
THIRTEENTH CONGRESS

House Bill No. 451

Introduced by Rep. Manuel "Way Kurat" E. Zamora

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Election registrars rank high in a scale of public service jobs entailing physical risks in the performance of their functions. This is especially true during election periods when accusations of bias and misconduct are often hurled against them not only by the candidates but also by the voters themselves. This conception about them is being widely treated as a given due to the nature of their work and that none of them can rise above personal partisanship. They are often seen as prone to bribes and other personal favors in exchange of catering to the wishes of politicians.

The supposed cure for this perceived "excessive-fraternizing-and-familiarity-will-necessarily-lead-to-corruption" anomaly is Section 44 of Republic Act No. 8189 mandating the reassignment of election officers to a new station every four years outside of the original congressional district they are presently serving. At a glance, the intention of the law may be good. Its effects, however, are not very acceptable especially to the election registrars themselves.

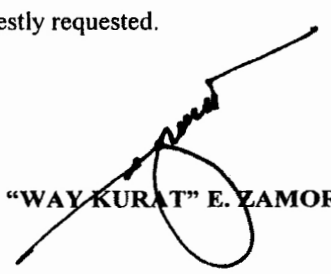
Many, if not all, of the election registrars, are opposed to the said provision of the law. They say that Article 7, Section 56 of the Omnibus Election Code already provides for a safety valve mechanism to prevent their becoming preys to corruption during elections. Under the said provision, the Commission may make changes in the composition, distribution and assignment of field offices, as well as its personnel, whenever the exigencies of the service under the interest of free, orderly and honest elections so require. These changes shall be effective and enforceable only during the election period concerned.

While it is widely seen as not germane to the subject of the law, they are also considering Sec. 44 of RA No. 8189 as class legislation. It onerously affects them in many ways such as: 1) it dislocates their families every four years and thereafter; 2) the schooling of their children is greatly affected; 3) the reassignment entails additional expenses in maintaining and establishing a new residence in another area every four years; 4) being away from home diminishes the effectiveness of the performance of their duties and functions; and 5) it is retrogressive on the part of public service on the ground that public service is best rendered by a public servant who has established good rapport with the constituency of his/her area of responsibility.

This representation shares the predicament of the election registrars. Corruption will only afflict people who chose to be corrupted. No amount of fraternizing will lead to political favors and misdeeds if only an election officer is an honest public servant whose integrity is beyond question.

This bill seeks to delete Section 44 of Republic Act No. 8189 and revert back to Article 7, Section 56 of the Omnibus Election Code as the operative rule governing the reassignment of election officers.

The immediate and favorable passage of this bill is earnestly requested.


MANUEL "WAY KURAT" E. ZAMORA

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AN ACT AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8189 ENTITLED, "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR A GENERAL REGISTRATION OF VOTERS, ADOPTING A SYSTEM OF CONTINUING REGISTRATION, PRESCRIBING THE PROCEDURES THEREOF AND AUTHORIZING THE APPROPRIATION OF FUNDS THEREFOR" BY DELETING SECTION 44 THEREOF

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

SECTION 1. Section 44 of Republic Act No. 8189 entitled, "An Act Providing for a General Registration of Voters, Adopting a System of Continuing Registration, Prescribing the Procedures Thereof and Authorizing the Appropriation of Funds Therefor," is hereby deleted.

SEC. 7. This Act shall take effect upon its approval.

Approved,