

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 1960

Introduced by Reps. TEODORO A. CASIÑO, NERI JAVIER COLMENARES,
LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN, RAFAEL V. MARIANO, RAYMOND V. PALATINO
EMERENCIANA A. DE JESUS, and ANTONIO L. TINIO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The necessity of a free press in a striving democracy like the Philippines has been clearly demonstrated over the years. Besides delivering up-to-date and informative news every day, the press has been pivotal in exposing corruption, human rights violations and other injustices. During critical times of the elections, media practitioners serve as both watchdogs and help desks, revealing images of election fraud and bribery, facilitating reports of violence and inefficiency.

However, it is their own public service that hinders them from exercising their right to vote. Often, these media practitioners are stationed in different parts of the country to closely monitor election events. More often than not, they do not have enough time and capacity to travel to their own polling precincts and vote.

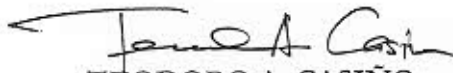
All citizens above 18 years old, unless disqualified by law, are accorded the right of suffrage. In the past and up to the present, special provisions have been arranged to grant early and absentee voting for our overseas workers, military and police personnel who are assigned to perform duties on Election Day. It is only fair to extend the opportunity to members of the media.

This bill seeks to grant media practitioners assigned in areas other than their polling places the right to participate in the elections through early voting.

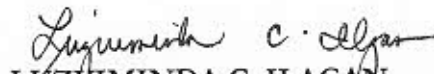
Last 14th Congress, both the House of Representatives and the Senate approved separate bills calling for advance voting in certain areas and of certain sectors, including the media, detainees and uniformed personnel. Congress, however, failed to pass a reconciled version of House Bill 6928 and Senate Bill 3570. It is hoped that this measure will be given priority under the new Congress.

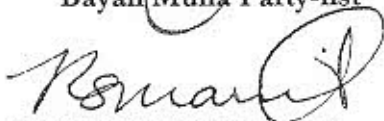
In view of the foregoing, immediate approval thereof is sought.

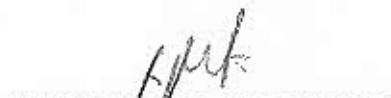
Approved,


TEODORO A. CASINO
Bayan Muna Party-list


NERI JAVIER COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party-list


LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
Gabriela Women's Party


RAFAEL V. MARIANO
Anakpawis Party-list


RAYMOND V. PALATINO
Kabataan Party-list


EMERENCIANA A. DE JESUS
Gabriela Women's Party


ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-list

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING TO QUALIFIED MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “*Early Voting for Media Act of 2010.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – All Filipino citizens at least eighteen years old, unless disqualified by law, are accorded the right of suffrage. The State ensures equal opportunity to all in order to exercise this fundamental right. This includes special cases wherein citizens, carrying out public service, cannot cast their votes on election day.

SECTION 3. *Coverage.* – Any registered voter, by reason of his/her duties as member of the media, who cannot cast his/her vote on election day may vote in his/her municipality or city in advance.

SECTION 4. *Requirements.* – Thirty days before the election, officers of media establishments shall submit to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) a list of members of their media staff who will be assigned away from their polling place and will not be able to vote on Election Day but desire to exercise their right to vote. Upon verification by the COMELEC, the media practitioners, all of which must be registered voters, must fill up an application form for early voting.

SECTION 5. *Voting procedures.* – Those qualified to vote early may cast his/her ballot in the Office of the Municipal/City Election Registrar where he/she is registered during office hours within fourteen (14) working days before the day of elections. He/she will be allowed to vote for as many positions available, as any other qualified voter.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The COMELEC shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – The budget needed to implement provisions of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 11. *Constitutionality.* – Should any provision of this Act be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the validity or constitutionality of the other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, letters of instructions, resolutions, orders, ordinances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,