



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Fifteenth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **3965**

Introduced by Honorable Erico B. Aumentado

EXPLANATORY NOTE

As part of electoral reform, this bill seeks to require any applicant eighteen (18) years old and above to submit a duly issued and authenticated voter's registration certificate from the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) for the issuance of a passport.

Suffrage is a fundamental right and the State shall ensure equal opportunity of all qualified citizens of the Philippines, here and abroad, in the exercise of this right. Data from the recently conducted 2010 national and local elections showed the low turnout of voters, particularly of Filipinos abroad. There are currently about 3.6 million overseas Filipinos. For the 2010 national elections, the number of registered voters for Filipinos overseas is 589,830 of which only 153,323 voted, or a low turnout rate of 4.2 percent.

In order to address the low registration and low voter turnout of Filipinos abroad and to maximize the opportunity of Filipinos to vote, there is a need to amend Republic Act No. 8239, otherwise known as the "*Philippine Passport Act of 1996*," and require the submission by any applicant eighteen (18) years old and above of a voter's registration certificate before the issuance of a passport. In case of passport renewal, a voter's registration certificate would also be required to ensure that all passport holders who are entitled to the right of suffrage are duly registered as voters. The passage of this bill will ensure that within five (5) years of its implementation, all Filipinos who hold a passport and are entitled to vote have registered with the COMELEC. An increased voters registration, particularly of overseas Filipinos, could significantly contribute to a higher voters turnout in future elections.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly recommended.


ERICO B. AUMENTADO



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AN ACT
REQUIRING A VOTER'S REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE FOR THE
ISSUANCE OF PASSPORT, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC
ACT NO. 8239, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "PHILIPPINE PASSPORT
ACT OF 1996"

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

SECTION 1. Section 5 of Republic Act No. 8239 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 5. *Requirements for the Issuance of Passport.* – No passport shall be issued to an applicant unless the Secretary or his duly authorized representative is satisfied that the applicant is a Filipino citizen who has complied with the following requirements:

a) xxx xxx xxx
 xxx xxx xxx

h) In the case of discrepancy between the applicant's name in the birth certificate and in any other private documents, the former shall prevail over the latter unless by operation of law or through court order, the applicant is permitted to use name other than what is officially recorded in the Civil Register; [and]

i) If the applicant is government employee, the travel authority issued by the head of department, agency or office, may be required only if said applicant is applying for an official passport[.];
AND

J) IF THE APPLICANT IS EIGHTEEN (18) YEARS OLD AND ABOVE, A VOTER'S REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE DULY ISSUED OR AUTHENTICATED BY THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS.

SEC. 2. The Secretary of Foreign Affairs shall issue rules and regulations as may be necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 3. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in any two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,