



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

Fifteenth Congress  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3966

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**Introduced by Honorable Erico B. Aumentado**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

This bill seeks to provide for the adoption of voting by mail as an option to personal voting in countries with overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).

It is the objective of the State to ensure equal opportunity in the exercise of the right to vote to all qualified OFWs abroad. Absentee voting, either in person or by mail, is the surest method by which our OFWs abroad can exercise this fundamental right.

Records at the Commission on Elections show that in the previous election, there were at least 3.6 Million qualified voters abroad. Out of this figure, 589,830 were registered voters while only 153,323 actually voted broken down as follows: 39,564 voted by mail, 64,743 voted manually or in person and 49,016 voted through automation.

Republic Act No. 9189, otherwise known as "*The Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003*," provides for the voting by mail to only three (3) countries. This limitation effectively disenfranchises many OFWs abroad. The adoption of voting by mail as an option to personal voting in all countries with overseas Filipino workers is one way of solving this perennial problem.

Hence, the approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

  
**ERICO B. AUMENTADO**



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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR THE ADOPTION OF VOTING BY MAIL AS AN**  
**OPTION TO PERSONAL VOTING IN ALL COUNTRIES WITH**  
**OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE**  
**REPUBLIC ACT NO. 9189, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "*THE OVERSEAS***  
***ABSENTEE VOTING ACT OF 2003*"**

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

SECTION 1. Paragraph 17.1, Section 17 of Republic Act No. 9189 is hereby amended by deleting sub-paragraph (a) and renumbering the remaining paragraphs to read as follows:

**"Sec. 17. *Voting by Mail.* –**

17.1 [For the May, 2004 elections] The Commission shall authorize voting by mail AS AN OPTION TO VOTING IN PERSON in ALL COUNTRIES WITH OVERSEAS FILIPINO WORKERS [not more than three (3) countries, subject to the approval of the Congressional Oversight Committee. Voting by mail may be allowed in]: *PROVIDED*, THAT THESE COUNTRIES [that] satisfy the following conditions:

[a] Where the mailing system is fairly well-developed and secure to prevent occasion for fraud;]

[b)] A) Where there exists a technically established identification system that would preclude multiple or proxy voting; and

[c)] B) Where the system of reception and custody of mailed ballots in the embassies, consulates and other foreign service establishments concerned are adequate and well-secured.

[Thereafter, voting by mail in any country shall be allowed only upon review and approval of the Joint Congressional Oversight Committee.]

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

Approved,