

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 4048

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Suffrage or the right to vote for government officials is a constitutionally afforded right of all Filipino citizens, unless disqualified by law. Being the sole determinant of electoral succession, it is a highly valued right and widely regarded as an exercise of democracy.

While there are no literacy or economic requirements to qualify as a voter, physical limitations have hindered senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) from casting their votes. During the last elections, news programs showed footage of senior citizens leaving polling centers instead of climbing two flights of stairs to reach their assigned voting precinct.

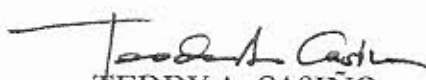
Relying on a wheeled contraption for mobility, Pepito Manio, co-director of the non-government organization Breaking Barriers for Children with Disabilities, had to seek the help of others to climb four floors and reach his precinct. This is amid the issuance of the Commission on Elections' Resolution No. 8739 which orders the use of ground-level rooms for precincts of disabled voters.

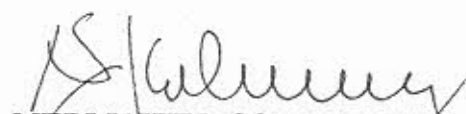
This bill seeks to remedy the said lapses and problems of existing regulations.

With around a million PWDs and almost five million senior citizens, it will be impossible to ensure that all their precincts will be situated at ground-level. With the approval of this bill, PWDs and senior citizens will instead be assigned to special voting rooms on election day. Their ballots will be collected on basis of their actual assigned precincts and will later be forwarded to the corresponding precincts.

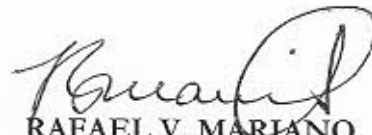
In view of the foregoing, immediate approval thereof is highly recommended.

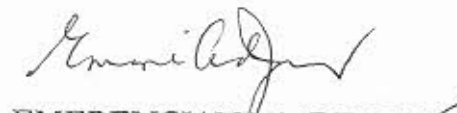
Approved,


TEDDY A. CASIÑO
Bayan Muna Party-list

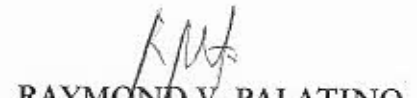

NERI JAVIER COLMENARES
Bayan Muna Party


LUZVIMINDA C. ILAGAN
Gabriela Women's Party


RAFAEL V. MARIANO
Anakpawis Party-list


EMERENCIANA A. DE JESUS
Gabriela Women's Party


ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-list


RAYMOND V. PALATINO
Kabataan Party-list

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AN ACT
MANDATING THE USE OF GROUND-FLOOR POLLING PLACES FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS

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 “Polling Center Accessibility Act of 2011.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of policy.* – The State shall ensure the right to suffrage of all Filipinos, unless disqualified by law. In response to physical limitations of senior citizens and persons with disabilities, the government shall design procedures to make polling centers accessible.

SECTION 3. *Use of ground-floor polling places for persons with disabilities and senior citizens.* The government, through the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), shall designate special polling rooms for senior citizens and persons with disabilities. The rooms shall be located at the ground floor of each polling center. Instead of proceeding to their precincts, the elderly and persons with disabilities will be allowed to vote in the special rooms where extra ballot boxes of their assigned precincts will be provided. At the end of day, before the counting of ballots or transmission of votes, the assigned board of election inspectors shall submit the ballot boxes to the corresponding precincts for consolidation.

SECTION 4. *Number of special polling rooms.* – COMELEC will determine the number of special polling rooms based on the number of elderly and disabled registered voters.

SECTION 5. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the COMELEC shall promulgate and issue the rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SECTION 6. *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 5. *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 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,