

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 4546

Introduced by **Hon. GABRIEL LUIS R. QUISUMBING**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Suffrage is the lifeblood of a democracy. The Constitution, Article 5, Section 1 provides:

Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place where they propose to vote for at six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage.

During the national elections last 2013, news programs showed footage of people with disabilities leaving polling centers because their physical conditions cannot endure the long lines and lengthy procedure they have to undergo in order to cast their votes. Hence, these people with disabilities were deprived of the opportunity to exercise the very basic right of suffrage.

Accordingly, in this legislation, the author seeks to provide for early voting of people with disabilities in the Philippines for the National and Local Elections.

Hence the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


GABRIEL LUIS R. QUISUMBING

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AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (PWDs) AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Title. This act shall be known as the "Early Voting for Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) Act of 2014"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. The State shall ensure the exercise of the right of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law.

SECTION 3. Requirements. Thirty (30) days before the election, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) shall implement the following:

- COMELEC shall keep a record of Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) who are registered as voters.
- COMELEC shall coordinate with the Local Government Units (LGU), National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Department of Health (DOH), the Department of Local and Interior Government (DILG) in designing systems and assistance to be accorded to Senior Citizens.
- COMELEC shall designate accessible polling places where Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) may be able to cast their vote, ensuring that such polling places are provided with the necessary mobility, communication, visual and other forms of assistance for concerned voters.

SECTION 4. Voting Procedures. Those herein 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 one (1) working day before the day of the election. He/ she will be allowed to vote for as many positions available, as any other qualified voter.

SECTION 5. Appropriations. – COMELEC shall include allocation in its budget programs for the implementation of this Act. The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations or from any available savings of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The COMELEC shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

SECTION 7. Repealing Clause. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 8. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

