

*Republic of the Philippines*  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**SIXTEENTH CONGRESS**

Second Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 4958**



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Introduced by: Hon. Angelina "Helen" D.L. Tan, M.D.

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article V, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitutions provides that, "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 wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage."

The right to suffrage is the essence of our democracy. As a means to increase participation by citizens who are otherwise prevented to vote, the country has enacted absentee voting laws. Presently, there are laws that allow absentee voting for Filipinos overseas, media practitioners, armed forces and police force. However, these still leave another group disenfranchised due to their physical conditions.

Persons with disabilities (PWDs) have a significant role to play in nation building. As such, it is important to ensure that their voices will be heard and their votes will be counted during elections. However, some of them may not be able to vote as they are stationed away from their residences on election days due to disability issues and conditions.

Hence, this bill provides for means for PWDs stationed away from their residences on election days to vote on national elections in the precincts nearest to them subject to reasonable regulations by the Commission on Election.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

  
**ANGELINA "HELEN" D.L. TAN, M.D.**  
4<sup>th</sup> District, Quezon

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR LOCAL ABSENTEE VOTING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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

**SECTION. 1. Declaration of Policy.** - The state shall ensure the free exercise of the right of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law.

**SEC. 2. Local Absentee Voting for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).** - The Commission on Elections shall extend the right to vote under the local absentee voting system provided under existing laws and executive orders to all persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the country who are duly registered voters and who, on election day, may not be able to vote due to their condition. *Provided, That* they shall be allowed to vote only for the positions of President, Vice President, Senators and Party-List Representative.

**SEC. 3. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - The Commission on Elections shall, within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations which shall include a system of accreditation and verification of the PWDs who are qualified to avail of local absentee voting.

**SEC. 4. Appropriations.** - The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations or from any available savings of the Commission on Elections. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 5. Separability Clause.** - If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

**SEC. 6. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, resolutions, rules and regulations, other issuances, and parts thereof, which are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 7. Effectivity.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,