

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

SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8158



Introduced by Honorable FREDERICK W. SIAO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

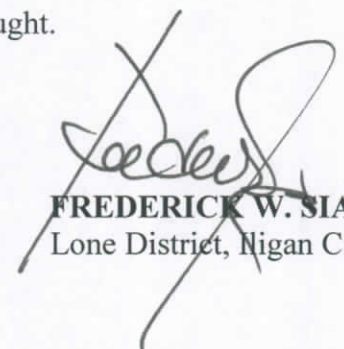
This bill seeks to authorize the Commission on Elections to provide field offices for the provincial election supervisor and election registrar, amending for the purpose Section 55 of Batas Pambansa (BP) Blg. 881, otherwise known as the "*Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines*," as amended, and appropriating funds therefor.

Section 55 of the Omnibus Election Code states that "*The local government concerned shall provide a suitable place for the office of the provincial election supervisor and his staff and the election registrar and his staff: Provided, That in case of failure of the local government concerned to provide such suitable place, the provincial election supervisor or the election registrar, as the case may be, upon prior authority of the Commission and notice to the local government concerned, may lease another place for office and the rentals thereof shall be chargeable to the funds of the local government concerned.*"

As an independent constitutional commission, the Commission on Elections enjoys fiscal autonomy and exercises its duties and responsibilities without the influence, approval or dependence on any government entity. Section 55 of the Omnibus Election Code, however, clearly runs counter to the constitutional provision guaranteeing this autonomy. It vests upon the local government units (LGUs) the authority to provide the suitable place for the field offices of the Commission on Elections. Given this mandate, the Commission on Elections is clearly precluded from making significant decisions regarding the building of its field offices where it discharges most of its main functions, including renovation, improvement or construction thereof. Due to the often-limited budget of the LGUs, the maintenance of the field offices is not given priority, resulting to cramped, restricted and uncomfortable working conditions. Considering the flow of people seeking the services of the Commission on Elections, these field offices must reflect professionalism, cleanliness and orderliness. Physical aspects aside, the integrity of the field office is also compromised due to the field officers' proximity to local officials. This is a more serious issue that the Commission on Elections must address, if only to preserve its credibility, promote transparency and ensure accountability.

This bill provides for appropriation of funds and a three-year period within which all existing field offices must be transferred from the local government unit-owned facilities to office spaces owned by the Commission on Elections.

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


FREDERICK W. SIAO
Lone District, Nigan City

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AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO PROVIDE FIELD OFFICES
FOR THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR AND ELECTION REGISTRAR,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 55 OF BATAS PAMBANSA BLG. 881,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE OF THE PHILIPPINES,”
AS AMENDED, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

SECTION 1. Section 55 of the Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, as amended, is hereby further amended to read as follows:

~~“SEC. 55. Office Space. – [The local government concerned shall provide a suitable place for the office of the provincial election supervisor and his staff and the election registrar and his staff: *Provided*, That in case of failure of the local government concerned to provide such suitable place, the provincial election supervisor or the election registrar, as the case may be, upon prior authority of the Commission and notice to the local government concerned, may lease another place for office and the rentals thereof shall be chargeable to the funds of the local government concerned.]~~ **THE COMMISSION IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO PROVIDE FIELD OFFICES FOR THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR AND ELECTION REGISTRAR, WHICH SHALL BE SEPARATE FROM THE OFFICES OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNITS THAT CURRENTLY PROVIDE THE OFFICE SPACES TO EXISTING FIELD OFFICES.”**

SEC. 2. Within six (6) months from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Elections shall formulate a transfer plan to move all existing field offices from the local government unit-controlled facilities to Commission on Elections-owned or -leased facilities. The

plan shall provide for a complete transfer of all field offices within a period of three (3) years from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC. 3. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the appropriations 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. 4. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a national newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,