

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8191

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE MICHAEL L. ROMERO

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The State shall prioritize and provide the appropriate tools, means and funding in order for the Commission on Elections (**COMELEC**) to perform its noble mandates:

I. Policy and Planning

- (1) Formulate, recommend and implement national election policies, plans, programs and guidelines that will promote the development and use of modern mechanisms with due consideration to the advantages of convergence and emerging technologies;
- (2) Formulate election schemes and initiatives, in coordination with all the other Department of the Executive, to develop and promote modern election mechanisms consistent with the national goals and objectives, and responsive to the ever growing number of voters;
- (3) Provide an integrated framework in order to optimize all resources and networks for the identification and prioritization of

all offices, systems and applications as provided for by the states Master plan and the Philippine Development Plan;

II. Improved Access

(4) Prescribe rules and regulations for the establishment, operation and maintenance of election infrastructures in the unserved and underserved areas, in consultation with the local government units (LGUs), civil society organizations (CSOs), private sector, and the academe;

(5) Establish internet services in all its offices, using the most cost-effective telecommunications technology, through partnership with private service providers as may be necessary;

III. Resource-Sharing and Capacity-Building

(6) Harmonize and coordinate all national election plans and initiatives to ensure knowledge, information and resource-sharing, database-building and agency networking linkages among government agencies, consistent with the Government objectives in particular, and national objectives in general;

(7) Ensure the development and protection of integrated government election infrastructures and designs, taking into consideration the inventory of existing manpower, plans, programs, software, hardware, and installed systems;

(8) Promote and provide technical expertise to all its offices in the development of guidelines in the enforcement and administration of laws, standards, rules, and regulations governing it;

(9) Assess, review and support research and development programs of the government in coordination with all the other institutions concerned;

(10) Prescribe the personnel qualifications and other qualification standards essential to the effective development and operation of election infrastructures and systems;

(11) Develop programs that would enhance the career advancement opportunities of all Comelec workers;

(12) Assist in the dissemination of all vital information essential to its operations and organization; and

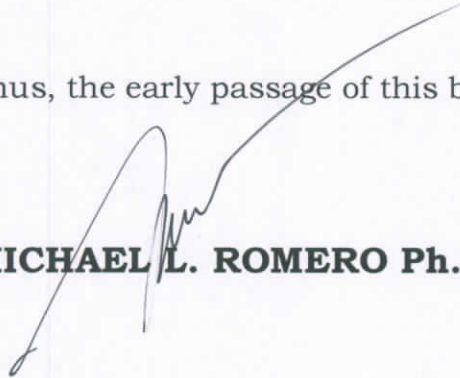
(13) Represent and negotiate for national interest on matters pertaining to elections in international bodies, and other institutions concerned.

IV. Voter Protection and Industry Development

(14) Ensure and protect the rights and welfare of its officers, employees and personnel to privacy, security and confidentiality in matters relating to election concerns, in coordination with all other agencies concerned, the private sector and relevant international bodies.

This House Bill seeks to provide additional organizational, operational and developmental funding to the Commission on Elections (**COMELEC**), to promote and hasten the imposition and implement laws, policies, plans, programs, projects, rules and regulations of the **COMELEC**; and to provide efficient services to the Filipino people.

Thus, the early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.



MICHAEL L. ROMERO Ph.D.

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR ADDITIONAL ORGANIZATIONAL,
OPERATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL FUNDING TO THE
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS (**COMELEC**), TO PROMOTE
AND ENHANCE ICT MECHANISMS AND PROJECTS, TO
FOSTER AND ACCELERATE THE CONVERGENCE OF ICT
ENABLED FACILITIES, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representative of the Philippines
in congress assembled:*

SECTION 1. DECLARATION OF POLICY – It is hereby declared by
the state to appropriate additional organizational and operational
funding for the Commission on Elections (**COMELEC**).

The state shall hereby recognize:

- (a) The vital role of the COMELEC in nation-building;

(b) To ensure the provision of strategic, reliable, cost-efficient and citizen-centric election technology, infrastructure, systems and resources;

(c) To ensure universal access to quality, affordable, reliable and secure services;

(d) To promote the development and widespread use of emerging new Comelec-ICT technologies;

(e) To ensure the availability and accessibility of services in all areas;

(f) To foster an Integrated and automated policy environment that will promote a broad market-led development of the election and ICT-enabled services;

(g) To promote and assist the development of local and national election database-ICT content, applications and services which may include support for ICT-based start-up enterprises through strategic partnerships;

(h) To promote the use of modern Comelec-ICT mechanisms and technologies for the enhancement of key public services, such as education, public health and safety, revenue generation, and socio-civic purposes;

(i) To encourage the use modern Comelec-ICT mechanisms and technologies for the development and promotion of the country's election procedures, and national identity;

- (j) To promote digital literacy, Comelec-ICT expertise, and knowledge-building among citizens to enable them to participate and compete in an evolving ICT age;
- (k) To empower, through the use of Comelec-ICT, the disadvantaged segments of the population, including the elderly, persons with disabilities and indigenous and minority groups;
- (l) To ensure the rights of individuals to privacy and confidentiality of their personal information;
- (m) To ensure the security of critical Comelec-ICT infrastructures including information assets of the government; and
- (n) To provide oversight, governance and regulating the Comelec-ICT sector and ensure voters protection and welfare, data privacy and security.

Additional requirements shall be charged to the appropriations under the current General Appropriations Act (GAA).

SECTION 2. APPROPRIATIONS – The amount of Five hundred million pesos (**P500,000,000.00**) shall hereby be appropriated as additional organizational, operational and developmental funding to carry-out the mandates of the Commission on Elections (**COMELEC**).

Thereafter, such sum as may be needed for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act (**GAA**).

SECTION 3. IMPLEMENTING RULES AND REGULATIONS. – The departments and agencies charged with carrying out the provisions of this Act shall, within sixty **(60)** days after the effectivity of this Act, formulate the necessary rules and regulations for its effective implementation.

SECTION 4. REPEALING CLAUSE. – All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 5. SEPARABILITY CLAUSE. – If, for any reason, any section or provision of this Act is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 6. EFFECTIVITY CLAUSE. – This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days from its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation whichever comes earlier.

Approved,