

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

**SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Third Regular Session**

HOUSE BILL No. 8258



**Introduced by HON. FRANCISCO G. DATOL, JR.
HON. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO and HON. FELICIANO R. BELMONTE, JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to upgrade the salaries of Commission on Elections (COMELEC) employees in the Main and Field Offices.

The COMELEC is one of the bastions of Philippine democracy. It's mandate is to ensure the people's democratic right to choose the country's leaders are protected and upheld.

The COMELEC is the constitutionally mandated agency tasked to enforce and administer all laws and regulations relative to the conduct of elections, plebiscites, initiatives, referendum, and recall. It also is mandated to continually register qualified voters, political parties and coalitions and candidates.

But for decades, the principle of "equal pay for equal work and responsibility" has not been felt by employees of this Constitutional body. With more than 5,000 employees nationwide, the COMELEC is dominated by rank and file workers who receive mid- to low level income. COMELEC employees are working with a stark difference in salary grades compared to fellow employees with similar qualifications and positions in other government agencies and Constitutional Commissions. This situation moved the employees to organize the COMELEC Employees' Union (COMELEC-EU) in 2012 to actively work for substantial and just salary increases, among other purposes.

The disparity in wages is most felt at the COMELEC Field Offices.

A COMELEC Provincial Election Supervisor I (PES I), all of whom are lawyers, is paid with wages much lower than a Division Chief in other government offices, Salary Grade 23. Meanwhile, an Election Officer I is paid with a measly monthly salary of P22, 149 (Salary Grade 12) despite their huge responsibility of running the elections in a district, city or municipality.

Examples of Election Officer's counterpart in a municipality are Municipal Treasurers and Municipal Local Government Officers whose monthly salary is P73,299 Salary Grade 24. Meanwhile, a Provincial Election Supervisor's counterpart include Provincial Prosecutors (Salary Grade 28/ P114,981 per month) and Schools Division Superintendent (Salary Grade 30/ P143,534.

Employees in the Main Office, on the other hand, are mostly left with a monthly take home pay of P5,000 because of mandatory deductions and payment of loans they were forced to incur.

Every step of the election process, from voter's registration, canvassing of votes and proclamation of election winners is effectively carried out since COMELEC employees work all year round. This work gets all the more difficult during the four-month election period of each and every election season.

The clamor of COMELEC employees for decent salaries has been falling on deaf ears for so long. It will be a continuing injustice to allow our nation's election workers – the backbone of the democratic exercise – with salaries that are grossly disproportionate to their roles in government and society.

It is also incumbent on Congress to answer the COMELEC employees call for adequate adjustments in their Salary Grades to help insulate them from graft and corruption, and to compensate them for the risks like election-related violence they face time and again.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate approval of this measure is earnestly requested.

Approved,



HON. FRANCISCO G. DATOL, JR.
Senior Citizens PartyList



HON. GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
2nd District, Pampanga



HON. FELICIANO R. BELMONTE, JR.
4th District, Quezon City

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**Introduced by HON. FRANCISCO G. DATOL, JR.
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AN ACT REORGANIZING THE COMELEC OFFICES

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 "**An Act Reorganizing COMELEC Offices.**"

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. - In accordance with the equal protection clause of the Constitution, it is the State's responsibility to provide adequate and appropriate remuneration to employees with the ultimate goal of achieving equal pay for equal work in government service.

SECTION 3. Field Offices. - The Commission shall have the following field offices:

(1) Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election Director and assisted by the Assistant Regional Election Director, Regional Election Attorney with the rank of Attorney V, Human Resource Management Officer, Budget Officer, Finance Officer, Assistant Election Specialist, Stenographic Reporter III, Process Server, Watchman Officer, Administrative Aide, ORED Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service for the said office.

(2) Provincial Election Office, headed by the Provincial Election Director similar to the rank of Director II regardless of the number of registered voters, Computer Maintenance Technologist/Specialist (CMT/CMS) with SG-24, Assistant Election Specialist, Administrative Aide, OPES Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service for the said office.

(3) The National Capital Region shall be divided into five (5) administrative districts, such as North, South, East, Central and Manila District, or such number of administrative district as may be determined by the Commission, which shall be headed and administratively supervised by a District Election Director with the rank of Director II, Computer Maintenance Technologist/Specialist (CMT/CMS) with SG-24, Administrative Assistant V, Administrative Aide, Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service for the said office.

(4) City/Municipal Office, headed by City/Municipal Election Specialist with the rank of Director I regardless of their place of assignment.

(5) There shall be a minimum of two Assistant Election Specialists (AES) with SG-21 in every city or municipality provided that for every additional 20,000 voters from 50,000 voters, additional AES shall be automatically appointed.

The Commission may delegate its powers and functions or order the implementation or enforcement of its orders, rulings, or decisions through the heads of its field offices."

SECTION 4. *Reclassification and Upgrading of Plantilla Positions in the COMELEC Main and Field Offices.* - All the remaining rank and file plantilla positions in the COMELEC main and field offices shall be reclassified and upgraded accordingly by the Commission on Elections.

SECTION 5. *Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Budget and Management and the Commission on Elections shall adopt and issue the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

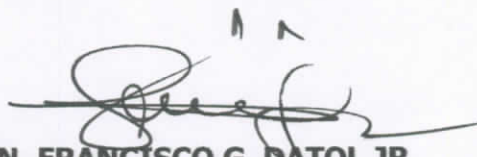
SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* - The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year's appropriations under the budget of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the provisions not affected shall thereby continue to be in full force and effect.

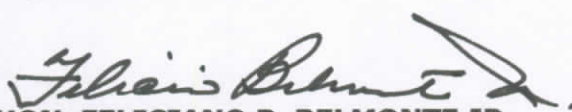
SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, presidential proclamations, letters of implementation, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 9. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,


HON. FRANCISCO G. DATOL, JR.
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