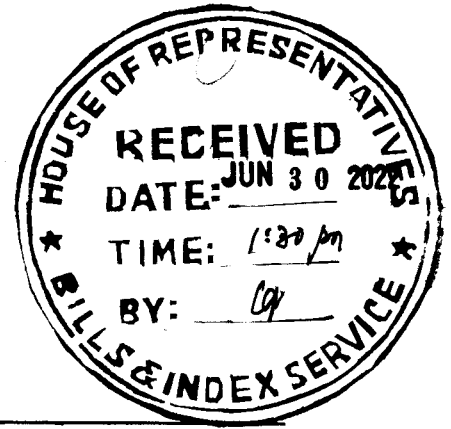


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 120



Introduced by: **REP. JULIET MARIE DE LEON FERRER**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

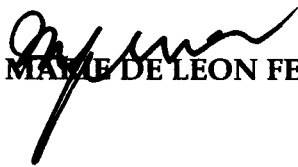
This measure seeks to grant authority to ~~the~~ Commission on Elections to establish methods that shall allow persons with disabilities (PWDs) and senior citizens to early voting.

Section 11, Article XIII of the 1987 Constitution provides that "the State shall adopt an integrated and comprehensive approach to health and shall endeavor to make essential good, health and other social services available to all people." It further provides that "there shall be priority for the needs of the underprivileged sick, elderly disabled, women and children. Section 1 of Article V of the Constitution, on the other hand, guarantees the right to suffrage to all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law.

At present, the exercise of PWDs and Senior Citizens right to suffrage has exposed them to certain risks. During national or local elections, while priority is given to them, they are still made to endure waiting hours and exposure to heat of the sun. These conditions expose them to health risks and hazards. Consistent with the constitutional policies and mandate, concrete measures should be taken to ensure their utmost welfare and safety.

The proposed measure aims at balancing the right and special needs of the PWDs and senior citizens. Through the provision of early voting, COMELEC will be able to address and cater to their special needs and to make polling places more suitable for their conditions.

It is for these reasons that I seek the approval of this bill.


JULIET MARIE DE LEON FERRER

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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NINETEENTH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 120

Introduced by: **REP. JULIET MARIE DE LEON FERRER**

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING BY QUALIFIED SENIOR CITIZENS
AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to make voting convenient for senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) by giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set for the elections.

SEC. 2. Early Voting. – For national and local elections, there shall be early voting where qualified senior citizens and PWDs may choose to cast their ballot at accessible establishments designated by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) within seven (7) working days before the date set for the elections.

SEC. 3. Registration. – There shall be a nationwide registration for senior citizens and PWDs to qualify them to avail of this early voting privilege. Those who are not registered under this Act shall vote on Election Day.

SEC. 4. Obligations of the COMELEC. – To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the COMELEC shall:

- (a) Keep a record of senior citizens and PWDs who are registered voters;
- (b) Design a registration system, in coordination with local government units, the National Council on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government, that allows senior citizens and PWDs to register and opt for early voting;

- (c) Ensure that polling places are safe and accessible to senior citizens and PWDs, and properly fitted with the necessary communication, visual and physical aids, as mandated under Republic Act No. 10366 entitled, An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens”; and
- (d) Mount an intensive information campaign on early voting for qualified senior citizens and PWDs.

SEC 5. Appropriations. – The initial amount for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. Applicability of Other Laws. – The provisions of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881 or the Omnibus Election Code; Republic Act No. 7166, entitled, “An Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations Therefor, and for Other Purposes”; and other election laws not inconsistent herewith shall be applied to facilitate early voting for qualified senior citizens and PWDs.

SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – Within ninety (90) days from its effectivity, the Commission shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC 9. Repealing Clause. – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are contrary to and inconsistent with any provision of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SEC. 10. Effectivity. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.