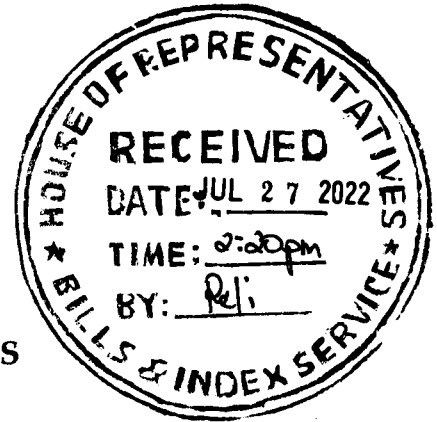




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City



NINETEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2503

Introduced by REPRESENTATIVE DANTE S. GARCIA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) plays a crucial role in nation-building as it safeguards the constitutional right of our citizens to suffrage, to freely choose - through honest, orderly and peaceful elections - those will represent and govern them.

It is one of the pillars of our democracy and it is an indispensable democratic institution. The 1987 Constitution supplies the poll body's mandate, which is to "Enforce and administer all laws and regulations relative to the conduct of an election, plebiscite, initiative, referendum, and recall," among others, as embodied in Article IX.

And as such, the State needs to ensure that those who work in COMELEC are honest, competent and exhibit the highest standards of accountability and public service. Corollary to this principle is the equal protection clause of the Constitution, which states that 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.

However, there appears to be a wide gap between the mandated responsibilities of COMELEC officials and employees, and the amount of compensation they receive in the fulfilment of such duties. They receive lower salaries than their counterparts in other government agencies.

As an example, a Provincial Election Supervisor is tasked to oversee election matters on a provincial level receives a lower salary than a Division Chief in a government agency. This low level of compensation is also a factor why

some COMELEC employees are susceptible to the commission of electoral fraud, although it should never be a justification.

This bill aims to revamp the organizational structure of the COMELEC in order to address, among others, the disparity in remuneration of its officials and employees to other government workers of equal rank, duties and responsibilities. This reorganization includes Field Offices of the COMELEC, and it involves the upgrade and reclassification of plantilla positions.

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



REP. DANTE S. GARCIA
2nd District, La Union



**REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
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Quezon City**

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS
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**AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE FIELD OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON
ELECTIONS BY UPGRADING AND CREATING CERTAIN POSITIONS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 53 OF BATAS PAMBANSA
BILANG 881, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE,"
AS AMENDED AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR**

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

SECTION 1. Section 53 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 881 is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 53. Field offices of the Commission. - The Commission shall have the following field offices:

- (1) Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election Director with the rank of Director IV and assisted by the Assistant Regional Director with the rank of Director III.**

Other officers and employees of the office are Regional Election Attorney, Senior Administrative Officer V, Accountant III, Human Resource Management Officer III, Supply Officer III, Stenographic Reporter III, Watchman, Process Server, Administrative Aide IV, Assistant Election Specialist, Utility Worker and driver II.

The positions and corresponding salary grades in the regional election office are as follows:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR IV	28
DIRECTOR III	27
ATTORNEY V	25
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	22
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
ACCOUNTANT III	19
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER III	18
SUPPLY OFFICER III	18
STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER III	11
WATCHMAN	7
PROCESS SERVER	5
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(2) Provincial Election Office, headed by the Provincial Election Director with the rank of Director II.

Other officers and employees of the office are Computer Maintenance Specialist, Assistant Election Specialist, Administrative Officer V, Watchman, Administrative Aide IV, Utility Worker and Driver II

The positions and corresponding salary grades in the provincial election office are as follows:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR II	26
COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	21
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	18
WATCHMAN	7
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(3) Highly Urbanized City (HUC) Election Office, headed by the HUC Election Director with the rank of Director II and assisted by a minimum of two (2) Assistant election specialists. Other officers and employees of the office are Computer Maintenance Specialist, Administrative Officer V, Watchman, Administrative Aide IV, Utility Worker, and Driver II.

The positions and corresponding salary grades in the HUC election office are as follows:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR II	26
COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	21
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALISTS	21
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	18
WATCHMAN	7
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(4) City or Municipal Election Office, headed by the City or Municipal Election Officer with the rank of Director I. There shall be a minimum of two (2) Assistant Election Specialists in every city or municipality; *Provided*, that for every additional 20,000 voters in excess of 50,000 voters, additional

Assistant Election Specialists shall be appointed. Other officers and employees of the office are Watchman, Administrative Aide IV, and Utility Worker.

The positions and corresponding salary grades in the City and Municipal election office are as follows:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR I	24
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
WATCHMAN	7
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3

Only the personnel mentioned in this section or expressly authorized by law, shall be assigned, designated, engaged, or detailed at the Commission's Field Offices, or allowed to perform administrative or clerical work in the field officer. Violation of this provision shall constitute an election offense.

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.

The implementation of this section shall be in accordance with the Organization, Staffing Position Classification and Compensation Standard and shall be submitted to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) for evaluation and approval.

SEC.2. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 3. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections shall, in coordination with the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission and Secretary of Budget and Management, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC.6. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,