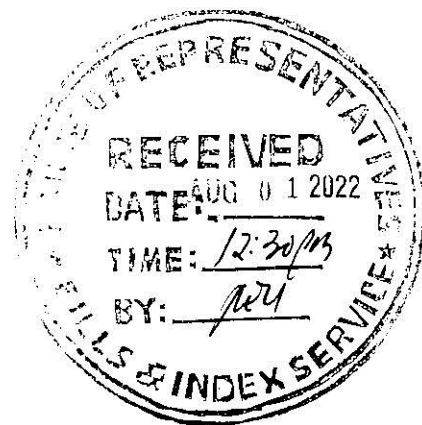


**Republic of the Philippines  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
Quezon City, Metro Manila**

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session**

**HOUSE BILL NO. 2812**



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**Introduced by Representatives  
HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR. and MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING**

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

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Voting is a fundamental right of the people, one which defines the Philippines as a democratic country. In fact, absentee voting laws have been enacted to ensure that each Filipino will be able to exercise this right.

While absentee voting laws allow Filipinos residing or working overseas, government officials and employees, media practitioners, members of the armed forces and police force to vote for national elective positions, there is no law granting senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) the same privilege. The experience of senior citizens and PWDs during the May 2022 elections, where they had to endure long lines, crowded precincts and extended waiting times due to technical problems in voting machines just to exercise their due right to suffrage,<sup>1</sup> underscore the need to grant elderly voters and PWDs the privilege to vote at an earlier period than the mandated voting day for the general citizenry.

In this proposed measure, qualified senior citizens and PWDs may opt to cast their ballots at accessible establishments designated by the COMELEC within seven (7) working days before the date set for the elections. Those who are not qualified shall vote on election day.

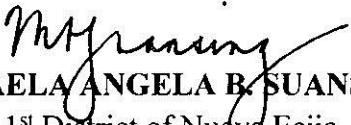
This bill was previously filed during the 18<sup>th</sup> Congress, and was approved on Third Reading.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/photos-senior-citizens-vote/>

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

  
**HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.**  
2<sup>nd</sup> District of Sultan Kudarat

  
**MIKAELA ANGELA B. SUANSING**  
1<sup>st</sup> District of Nueva Ecija

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**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 the 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 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.

**SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, decrees, executive orders, and proclamations, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

**SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**SECTION 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,