

Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City, Metro Manila  
Nineteenth Congress  
First Regular Session  
**HOUSE BILL NO. 7222**



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Introduced by Rep. Anthony R.T. Golez Jr. MD, MBAH

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Well-respected US President Lyndon B. Johnson once remarked that "The vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by human beings for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls which imprison people because they are different from others." Indeed, the right to suffrage is very powerful as it directs where our nation will go every time our populace decides who our leaders will be.

The proposed law herein aims to improve the voters registration system in view of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. This representation is one with the current leadership of the House of Representatives in its goal to bring the country back to its feet after the pandemic and at the same time, improve the voting registration system of the country. It is also highly believed that the use of technology will make voter registration smoother and will ensure that right to vote is upheld. As such, the proposed law herein allows and promotes the further integration of technology in voter registration, including online voter registration. In this manner, it is also believed that disenfranchisement of voters will be greatly avoided and younger voters will be encouraged to exercise their right to suffrage.

The further integration of technology in the promotion of the right to suffrage is seen as a right step towards having better elections, even in cases of pandemic or other disasters.

For the Filipino people, the approval of the proposed law herein is earnestly being sought.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "A. Golez Jr." with a stylized flourish.

HON. ANTHONY R.T. GOLEZ JR. MD, MBAH  
*Malasakit@Bayanihan Party List*

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**AN ACT IMPROVING THE PROCEDURE FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS  
AND ADOPTING A SYSTEM OF ONLINE REGISTRATION, AMENDING  
FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 22, 23, 24, 27,  
29, 32, 33 AND 45 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8189, OTHERWISE KNOWN  
AS THE "VOTER'S REGISTRATION ACT OF 1996"**

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

**SECTION 1.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8189 is hereby amended to read as

"SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is the policy of the State to [systematize the present method of registration in order to establish a clean, complete, permanent and updated list of voters] **ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF VOTERS REGISTRATION THAT ENSURES AND GUARANTEES A CLEAN, COMPLETE, PERMANENT, AND UPDATED LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE, AND TO PROMOTE AND ENSURE A DYNAMIC AND CONTINUING SYSTEM OF VOTER REGISTRATION, THE STATE SHALL ADOPT AND MAKE USE OF UP TO DATE TECHNOLOGY WHICH SHALL FACILITATE AND ALLOW AUTOMATED AND ONLINE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AS AN OPTION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE INTEGRITY, COMPLETENESS, AND ACCURACY OF THE LIST OF VOTERS.**"

**SEC. 2.** Section 3 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* - As used in is Act:

a) Registration refers to the act of accomplishing and filing of a sworn application for registration by a qualified voter **ONLINE OR** before the election officer of the city or municipality wherein [he] **THE APPLICANT** resides and including the same in the book of registered voters upon approval by the Election Registration Board. **REGISTRATION LIKewise REFERS TO OTHER PROCESSES WHICH ARE PART OF BEING A QUALIFIED VOTER SUCH AS THE REACTIVATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS, TRANSFER OF VOTER REGISTRATION RECORDS, AND CORRECTION OF ENTRIES THEREIN;**

x x x

n) Election Officer refers to the highest official or authorized representative in a city or municipality;

o) Board of Election Inspectors refers to the body which conducts the election in the polling place of the precinct usually composed of three (3) public school teachers appointed by the Commission[.]; AND

**P) DISINTERESTED WITNESS REFERS TO A REGISTERED VOTER IN THE SAME BARANGAY WHERE THE APPLICANT SEEKS TO REGISTER AND WHO RESIDES THEREAT, ATTESTING TO A CERTAIN FACT, THE IDENTITY, PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND RESIDENCE OF THE APPLICANT, BUT HAS NO PERSONAL ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE ON THE APPROVAL OR DISAPPROVAL OF THE APPLICANT'S VOTER REGISTRATION. A DISINTERESTED WITNESS SHOULD NOT BE RELATED TO THE APPLICANT WITHIN THE FOURTH (4TH) CIVIL HOWEVER, DEGREE OF CONSANGUINITY OR AFFINITY: PROVIDED, THAT NO DISINTERESTED WITNESS SHALL BE ALLOWED TO IDENTIFY MORE THAN THREE (3) APPLICANTS."**

**SEC. 3.** Section 8 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 8. *System of Continuing Registration of Voters.* The personal OR ELECTRONIC filing of application [of] FOR registration of voters shall be conducted daily in the office of the Election Officer during regular office hours OR THROUGH THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE COMMISSION. No registration shall, however, be conducted [during the period starting] WITHIN one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election and ninety (90) days before a special election."

**SEC. 4.** Section 9 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 9. *Who may Register.* All citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law who are at least eighteen (18) years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one (1) year, and in the [place] BARANGAY wherein they propose to vote, for at least six (6) months immediately preceding the election, may register as a voter[.]: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT NO PERSON SHALL BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER WITHOUT PRESENTING ANY VALID PROOF OF RESIDENCE, SUCH AS THE FOLLOWING:

**A) TAX DECLARATION OR PROOF OF PAYMENT OF REAL PROPERTY TAX, OR A CERTIFICATION FROM THE LANDOWNER OR LESSOR OF RESIDENTIAL UNIT, APARTMENT, CONDOMINIUM, DORMITORY OR SIMILAR DWELLING UNITS WHERE THE APPLICANT IS RESIDING AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION;**

**B) A RECENT HOUSEHOLD UTILITY BILL FOR GAS, ELECTRIC, WATER, TELEPHONE, CABLE, OR INTERNET CONSUMPTION, OR A STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT FOR MOBILE PHONE SUBSCRIPTION OR CREDIT CARD, UNDER THE APPLICANT'S NAME;**

**C) AFFIDAVIT OF AT LEAST TWO DISINTERESTED WITNESSES AS DEFINED IN SECTION 3 OF THIS ACT THAT THE APPLICANT IS A RESIDENT OF THE PLACE OF REGISTRATION; OR**

**D) OTHER COMPETENT PROOF OF RESIDENCE DECIDED UPON PROMULGATED BY THE COMMISSION.**

Any person who temporarily resides in another [city, municipality] **BARANGAY** or **ANOTHER** country solely by reason of his occupation, profession, employment in private or public service, educational activities, work in the military or naval reservations within the Philippines, service in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the National Police Forces, or confinement or detention in government institutions in accordance with law, shall not be deemed to have lost his original residence.

x x x"

**SEC. 5.** Section 10 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"**SEC. 10. Registration of Voters.** - A qualified voter shall be registered in the permanent list of voters in a precinct of the city or municipality [wherein he] **WHERE THE VOTER** resides to be able to vote in any election. To register as a voter, [he] **THE APPLICANT** shall personally **OR ELECTRONICALLY** accomplish an application form for registration as prescribed by the Commission in [three (3) copies before the Election Officer] **AND PERSONALLY SUBMIT THE ACCOMPLISHED FORM TO THE OFFICE OF THE ELECTION OFFICER OF THE CITY OR MUNICIPALITY WHERE THE VOTER RESIDES** on any date during office hours, **OR THROUGH THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE COMMISSION** [after having acquired the qualifications of a voter].

x x x

The application for registration [shall contain three (3) specimen signatures of the applicant, clear and legible rolled prints of his left and right thumbprints, with four (4) identification size copies of his latest photograph, attached thereto, to be taken at the expense of the Commission] **MAY BE SUBMITTED PERSONALLY OR ELECTRONICALLY AND SHALL BE PROCESSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10367 ENTITLED "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR**

**MANDATORY BIOMETRICS REGISTRATION" AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMISSION VOTER**

Before the applicant accomplishes [his] **THE** application for registration, the Election Officer shall inform [him] **THE APPLICANT** of the qualifications and disqualifications prescribed by law for a voter, and thereafter, see to it that the accomplished application contains all the data therein required and that the applicant's specimen signatures, fingerprints, and photographs are properly affixed in [all copies of] the voter's application. **IN CASE OF ONLINE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION BY AN APPLICANT, THE COMMISSION SHALL SEND A NOTICE CONFIRMING ITS RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION AND PROVIDING INSTRUCTIONS HOW THE APPLICANT MAY CHECK THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATION.**

**FURTHERMORE, THE COMMISSION SHALL EMPLOY DATA SECURITY MEASURES WHICH ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY AND INTEGRITY OF ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED VOTER REGISTRATION APPLICATIONS."**

**SEC. 6.** Section 12 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"**SEC. 12.** Change of Residence to Another [City or Municipality] **BARANGAY** Any registered voter who has transferred residence to another [city or municipality] **BARANGAY** may apply with the Election Officer of [his] **THE** new residence for the transfer of [his] **THE VOTER'S** registration records.

**NO TRANSFER OF A VOTER'S REGISTRATION TO ANOTHER BARANGAY SHALL BE ALLOWED WITHIN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY (120) DAYS BEFORE A REGULAR ELECTION AND NINETY (90) DAYS BEFORE A SPECIAL ELECTION.**

The application for transfer of registration shall be subject to the requirements of notice and hearing and the approval of the Election Registration Board, in accordance with this Act. Upon approval of the application for transfer, and after notice of such approval to the Election Officer of the former residence of the voter, said Election Officer shall transmit by registered mail **OR OTHER MODES OF SAFE, SECURE AND FAST TRANSMISSION** of the voter's registration record to the Election Officer of the voter's new residence."

**SEC. 7.** Section 13 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"**SEC. 13.** Change of Address [in the Same City or Municipality]. Any voter who has changed [his] address [in the same city or municipality] **WHICH SHALL NOT FALL UNDER A CHANGE IN BARANGAY AS PROVIDED UNDER SECTION 12 OF THIS ACT** shall immediately notify the Election Officer in writing. If the change of address involves a change in precinct, the Board shall transfer [his] **THE** registration record to the [precinct] book of voters of [his]

THE new precinct and notify the voter of [his] THE new precinct. All changes of address shall be reported to the office of the provincial election supervisor and the Commission in Manila."

SEC. 8. Section 22 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 22. Preservation of Voter's Registration Records. The Election Officer shall compile the [original] copies of the approved applications for registration per precinct and arrange the same alphabetically according to surname. He shall preserve the book of voters and ensure its integrity. [The second and third copies of the registration records] **THE COPY OF THE APPROVED APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION SHALL BE SCANNED BY THE ELECTION OFFICER AND THE SCANNED COPY** shall be sent to the provincial and national central files within [three (3)] FIVE (5) days after the approval of the Board.

**ALL APPROVED APPLICATIONS FILED DURING THE REGISTRATION PERIOD IN THE LOCAL VOTERS' DATABASE SHALL BE EXTRACTED AND STORED IN A USB OR OTHER STORAGE DEVICES AND SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR AND TO THE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF THE COMMISSION."**

SEC. 9. Section 23 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 23. Provincial File. There shall be a provincial file consisting of the [duplicate] **SCANNED** copies of all registration records in each precinct of every city and municipality in the province. It shall be in the custody of the Provincial Election Supervisor and shall be compiled and arranged by precinct, by municipality and alphabetically by surnames of voters.

x x x"

SEC. 10. Section 24 of of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 24. *National Central File*. There shall be a national central file under the custody of the Commission in Manila consisting of the [third] **SCANNED** copies of all approved voter registration records in each city or municipality. It shall be compiled by precinct in each city [/] **OR** municipality and arranged alphabetically by **DATE OF BOARD HEARING** [surname so as to make the file a replica of the book of voters in the possession of the Election Officer. Thereafter a national list shall be prepared following the alphabetical arrangements of surnames of voters].

There shall be a national file [consisting of the] **OF** computerized voters' list (CVL), [both] in [print and in diskette] **SOFT COPY**, submitted by the Election

Officers in each city and municipality concerned, under the custody of the Commission in Manila.

x x x"

SEC. 11. Section 27 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 27. Deactivation of Registration. —

x x x

d) Any person who did not vote in the [two (2)] **THREE (3)** successive preceding regular elections as shown by their voting records. For this purpose, regular elections do not include the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) elections;

x x x"

SEC. 12. Section 29 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 29. Cancellation of Registration. - The Board shall cancel the registration records of those who have died as certified by the [Local Civil Registrar] **THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (PSA) ON A MONTHLY BASIS. THE PROCESSING FEES OF THE MONTHLY CERTIFIED LIST OF PERSONS WHO DIED AS REQUESTED BY THE COMMISSION TO PSA SHALL BE WAIVED.** The [Local Civil Registrar] PSA shall submit each month a certified list of persons who died during the previous month to the Election Officer of the place where the deceased are registered. In the absence of information concerning the place where the deceased is registered, the list shall be sent to the Election Officer of the city or municipality of the deceased's residence as appearing in his death certificate. In any case, the [Local Civil Registrar] PSA shall furnish a copy of this list to the national central file and the proper provincial file.

x x x

SEC. 13. Section 32 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 32. *Common Rules Governing Judicial Proceedings in the Matter of Inclusion, Exclusion, and Correction of Names of Voters.* -

x x x

d) No cost[s] shall be assessed against any party in these proceedings. However, if the court should find that the application has been filed solely to harass the adverse party and cause him to incur expenses, it shall order the culpable party to pay the costs and incidental expenses. **NO COST SHALL**

**LIKewise BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE COMMISSION WHEN IT FILES A PETITION FOR EXCLUSION:**

x x x"

**SEC. 14.** Section 33 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 33. Jurisdiction in Inclusion and Exclusion Case. - The Municipal and Metropolitan Trial Courts shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction over all cases of inclusion and exclusio of voters in their respective cities or municipalities[.]: PROVIDED, THAT WHEN TH COMMISSION IS THE PETITIONER OF A CASE ON EXCLUSION OF VOTERS FILING AND OTHER COURT FEES SHALL BE WAIVED. Decisions of the Municipal or Metropolitan Trial Courts may be appealed by the aggrieved party to the Regional Trial Cour within five (5) days from receipt of notice thereof. Otherwise, said decision shall become final and executory. The regional trial court shall decide the appeal within ten (10) days from the time it is received and the decision shall immediately become final and executory. No motion for reconsideration shall be entertained.

**SEC. 15.** Section 45 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 45. Election Offenses. The following shall be considered election offenses under this Act:

x x x

i) the posting of a list of voters outside or at the door of a precinct on the day of an election, plebiscite, referendum, initiative and/or recall, and which list is different in contents from the certified list of voters being used by the Board of Election Inspectors; [and]

j) [Violation of the provisions of this Act] **THE TRANSFER OF A VOTER'S REGISTRATION OF RESIDENCE CONTRARY TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 12 OF THIS ACT; AND**

**K) VIOLATION OF ANY OTHER PROVISION OF THIS ACT.**

**SEC. 16.** The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act may be charged against the current appropriations of the Commission. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act must be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 17.** Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Elections, in consultation with the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Science and Technology, Department of Interior and Local Government, National Commission for Senior Citizens, and other stakeholders shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 18.** 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. 19.** 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. 20.** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

*Approved,*