



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

Twentieth (20th) Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2298



Introduced by **Representative MA. VICTORIA CO-PILAR**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Public schools and classrooms are primarily utilized by the government as polling places since the enactment of the Omnibus Election Code or Batas Pambansa Bilang 881 (BP 881) in 1985. With the growing population of registered voters, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) took initiatives to enhance the convenience and accessibility of voting for Filipinos, particularly the vulnerable sectors.

In the 2023 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections, the COMELEC had a pilot testing of mall voting conducted in eleven (11) shopping centers across the country. This initiative drew a significant number of voters and the procedure was generally smooth in many participating malls.

With this positive result, it is now incumbent upon us to make permanent the conduct of elections within the premises of shopping malls which pass qualifications required by law.

Under this bill, a shopping mall may be utilized as polling place if it is not owned or otherwise controlled by any candidate or of any person related to the candidate within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity.

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



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

Nineteenth Congress
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 2298

Introduced by **Representative MA. VICTORIA CO-PILAR**

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR THE CONDUCT OF NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS WITHIN THE
PREMISES OF SHOPPING MALLS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREOF

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

- 1 **Section 1. Short Title** – This Act shall be known and cited as the Mall Voting Convenience Act of 2023.
- 2
- 3 **Sec 2. Declaration of Policy** – It is hereby declared a policy of the State to ensure the holding of a free,
- 4 orderly, peaceful, credible, and convenient elections exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not
- 5 otherwise disqualified by law.
- 6
- 7 **Sec 3. Mall Voting** – The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) shall set up structures and other
- 8 mechanisms to allow the voting in all national and local elections, including barangay elections, within
- 9 the premises of shopping malls which shall include the following:
- 10 (a) The list of specific shopping malls which shall be utilized as voting precincts;
- 11 (b) The transfer of list of voters to be considered in the creation of mall voting sites who are to vote
- 12 in such shopping malls as voting precincts;
- 13 (c) The installation of voting machine and other devices to be used by the registered voters;
- 14 (d) The manner in which elections shall be conducted in these satellite voting precincts;
- 15 (e) Such other mechanism necessary for the effective implementation of this Act.
- 16
- 17 **Sec 4. Qualified Shopping Malls** – A shopping mall to be utilized as a voting precinct shall not be owned,
- 18 leased, or occupied by any candidate or of any person who is related to any candidate within the fourth
- 19 civil degree of consanguinity or affinity, or any officer of the government or leader of any political
- 20 party, group or faction, nor shall it be under the actual control of a private entity, political party or
- 21 religious organization. A shopping mall shall not be located within the perimeter of, or inside a military
- 22 or police camp or reservation or within a prison compound to be qualified as a voting precinct.

Any registered voter, candidate or political party may petition the Commission not later than thirty days before the first registration day for the transfer of the polling place from the prohibited buildings provided herein. Such petition shall be heard and decided by the Commission within twenty (20) days from the filing of the petition. Failure to effect the transfer of the polling place after the Commission found it to be located in violation of this section within the period prescribed herein shall be a ground for the postponement of the election in the polling place concerned.

Sec 5. Appropriations – The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations or from any available savings of the COMELEC. Thereafter, the amount necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Sec 6. Implementing Rules and Regulations – The COMELEC shall promulgate the Implementing Rules and Regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act. Such rules and regulations shall take effect upon their publication in three (3) newspapers of general circulation.

Sec 7. Separability Clause – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

Sec 8. Repealing Clause – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

Sec 9. Effectivity Clause – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,