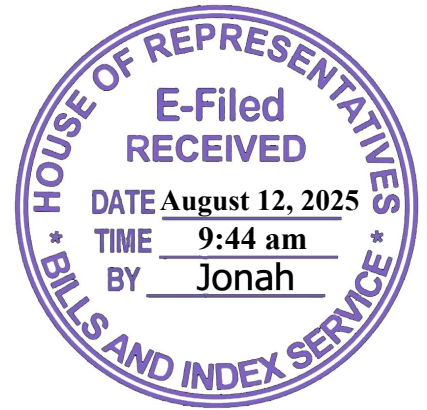


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 3516



INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE PM VARGAS

AN ACT
INTEGRATING VOTER EDUCATION IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR
HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the responsibility of the State to educate its citizens on their right to vote and to ingrain in them the duty to preserve the integrity of the electoral process.

It is essential that students at junior and senior high school be educated about elections and their electoral choice, that they would be well-informed about the country's political landscape and electoral processes, and mold them into becoming the pillars of democracy in the country.

Including this strategic and institutional platform will empower the youth by providing them with thorough knowledge in choosing leaders and prepare them to become responsible voters. It is the hope of this measure to prepare the next generation of Filipinos to have critical thinking to create better informed choices especially in choosing our next leaders and upholding democracy.

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


REP. PM VARGAS
Fifth District, Quezon City

Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

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

SECTION 1. Short Title. – This Act shall be known as the “*Compulsory Voter Education Act.*”

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy. – It is the policy of the State to enlighten citizens on their right to vote and to inculcate in them the duty to preserve the integrity of the electoral process through the educational system.

SECTION 3. Definition of Voter Education. - As used in this Act, “Voter education” means dissemination of information, materials and programs designed to inform citizens about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process. It includes providing information on the right to suffrage, its importance, and the proper exercise thereof, as well as information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to seek redress for grievances and report violations of election laws.

SECTION 4. Integration of Voter Education in the Junior and Senior High School Curricula. – Voter Education shall be integrated by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the junior and senior high school curricula, effective at the start of the school year immediately following one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act. The Commission on Election (COMELEC) shall assist the DepEd in preparing teachers during the one-year transition period by conducting seminars and trainings on the electoral system and process. COMELEC shall certify that the teacher, after attending such seminars and trainings, is qualified to teach topics relating to the electoral system and process.

SECTION 5. *Voter Education Syllabus.* -

- A. *Voter education.* – The main syllabus shall include, but not limited to, the following thematic areas:
- a. *Suffrage.* – This area introduces to students the right to vote accorded by the constitution, and other rights enabling citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs;
 - b. *Electoral system and process.* – This area deals with the general principles underlying the present electoral system, and legislation regulating all the phases of the election. It discusses the proper conduct of elections including registration, casting of ballots, and counting of votes;
- B. *Educated voting.* – This area focuses on the attitude and behavior a voter must adopt to ensure fair, free, and honest elections. It emphasizes the importance of participating in elections in a manner that shall stimulate and strengthen democracy.
- C. *Supplementary topics.* – This curriculum should have additional topics and studies on the political system of the country, the contextual background of elections, current political, social, and economic issues affecting the elections, and the possible solutions to address them.
- D. *Other subject matters.* – Other areas of voter education maybe included in the syllabus.

SECTION 6. *Educational Materials.* – It shall be obligatory on all schools offering secondary education to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the textbooks, primers, and leaflets on voter education to be issued by the DepEd. The DepEd shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrollment of the schools.

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – The Secretary of Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt a system to implement and carry out the provisions of this Act. The Secretary of Education shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Non-Impairment Clause.* – Nothing in this Act shall be construed as to diminish, impair, or repeal rights recognized, granted, or made available to disadvantaged, marginalized, or specific sectors under existing laws.

SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.* - If any part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, administrative orders, rules and regulations inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are deemed amended, modified or repealed accordingly.

SECTION 11. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect after fifteen (15) days following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,