

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 3746



Introduced by **HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE, HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA, AND HON. TERRY L. RIDON**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right of suffrage, enshrined in Article V, Section 1 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution, affirms that eligible citizens may freely exercise their vote in accordance with established residence and duration requirements. This constitutional guarantee underscores voting as a protected and essential pillar of democracy.

Amid the administration's drive toward a digitally empowered government, President Marcos Jr.'s 2025 SONA reaffirmed the commitment to expand digital transformation across all government services, emphasizing accessibility, efficiency, and transparency.¹ In line with this national vision, modernizing electoral registration is both timely and necessary.

The existing law, Republic Act 8189, or the "Voter Registration Act of 1996" requires physical presence and manual paper submission for voter registration – an outdated and often burdensome process for many Filipinos, including overseas citizens, persons with disabilities, and those in remote locations.

This legislation proposes amendments to institutionalize a secure, interoperable, and user-friendly online voter registration system under COMELEC. By introducing digital registration platforms and utilizing safe identity verification processes, the measure supports wider voter participation, reduces administrative bottlenecks, and aligns electoral processes with modern governance standards.

A similar proposal was approved on third reading and transmitted to the Senate during the 19th Congress, underscoring broad recognition of the need to transition toward digital voter registration.²

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


HON. MIGUEL LUIS R. VILLAFUERTE

¹ State of the Nation Philippines. (2025, July 28). *SONA 2025: Digital transformation and public service modernization*. <https://stateofthenation.gov.ph/sona/2025/>

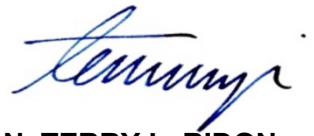
² Presidential Communications Office. (2023, July 25). *PBBM orders immediate digitalization of vital government services to boost ease of doing business, combat corruption*. https://pco.gov.ph/news_releases/pbbm-orders-immediate-digitalization-of-vital-government-services-to-boost-ease-of-doing-business-combat-corruption/

A stylized, cursive signature in black ink, featuring a large, sweeping loop at the top and a horizontal line at the bottom.

HON. VINCENZO RENATO LUIGI R. VILLAFUERTE

A cursive signature in black ink, with a large, flowing 'S' at the beginning and a horizontal line at the end.

HON. TSUYOSHI ANTHONY G. HORIBATA

A cursive signature in blue ink, with a large, flowing 'T' at the beginning and a horizontal line at the end.

HON. TERRY L. RIDON

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**AN ACT STRENGTHENING 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, 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:*

**CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

SECTION 1. Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8189, otherwise known as “The Voter’s
Registration Act of 1996”, is hereby amended to read as follows:

“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 REGISTRATION THAT ENSURES AND
GUARANTEES A CLEAN, COMPLETE, PERMANENT, AND UPDATED LIST OF
VOTERS. TO ENCOURAGE AND ENSURE A CONTINUING SYSTEM OF VOTER
REGISTRATION, THE STATE SHALL ADOPT AND MAKE USE OF
TECHNOLOGIES THAT SHALL FACILITATE AND ALLOW THE AUTOMATED
AND ONLINE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AS AN OPTION, TAKING INTO
ACCOUNT THE INTEGRITY, COMPLETENESS, AND ACCURACY OF THE LIST
OF VOTERS.**”

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

“SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this 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 ATTENDANT TO
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 of the Commission in a city or municipality; [and]

(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 DEGREE OF CONSANGUINITY OR AFFINITY: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT NO DISINTERESTED WITNESS SHALL BE ALLOWED TO IDENTIFY MORE THAN THREE (3) APPLICANTS."

SECTION 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."

SECTION 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 A PERSON SHALL BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER BY 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 PROOFS OF RESIDENCE DECIDED UPON AND PROMULGATED BY THE COMMISSION.**

Any person who temporarily resides in another [city, municipality] **BARANGAY** or **ANOTHER** country solely by reason of [his] **ONE'S** 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] **THE** original residence.

x x x"

SECTION 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 VOTER REGISTRATION" AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMISSION.**

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 PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS ON 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 APPLICATION."

SECTION 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 CITY OR**

MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH THE VOTER'S new residence **IS LOCATED** 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** the voter's registration record to the Election Officer of the voter's new residence."

SECTION 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 FOR 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 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."

SECTION 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] **AND** 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 VOTER'S DATABASE SHALL BE EXTRACTED AND STORED IN A UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS (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."

SECTION 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"

SECTION 10. Section 24 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 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 computerized voters' list (CVL), both in print and in diskette,] **A COMPLETE FILE OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS SHALL BE** submitted by the Election Officers [in] **OF** each city and municipality [concerned, under the custody of] **TO** the Commission in Manila [.] **WHICH SHALL KEEP COPIES OF THESE FILES IN ITS COMPUTERIZED DATABASE AND PRINTED RECORDS, AND EXERCISE CUSTODIAL RESPONSIBILITY OVER THEM.**

x x x

SECTION 11. 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 QUARTERLY BASIS. THE PROCESSING FEES OF THE QUARTERLY 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 are registered, the list shall be sent to the Election Officer of the city or municipality of the deceased's residence as appearing in [his] **THE** 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.

THE PSA SHALL ENSURE THAT ITS DATA PRIVACY NOTICE SUFFICIENTLY INFORMS AFFECTED PARTIES THAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS TO BE PROCESSED AND SHARED WITH THE COMMISSION TO ENABLE THE LATTER TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE TO INITIATE VOTER INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION PROCEEDINGS AND TO ESTABLISH A CLEAN, COMPLETE, PERMANENT, AND UPDATED LIST OF VOTERS UNDER THIS ACT, AND AS ALLOWED BY SECTION 12(E) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10173, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE DATA PRIVACY ACT OF 2012.

x x x"

SECTION 12. 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] **THE ADVERSE PARTY** 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"

SECTION 13. 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 exclusion of voters in their respective cities or municipalities[.]; **PROVIDED, THAT WHEN THE 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 Court 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.

SECTION 14. 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]

(i) [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 PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.

SECTION 15. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the Commission on Elections. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 16. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – 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 the 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.

SECTION 17. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 18. *Repealing Clause.* – Act No. 2137, otherwise known as the Warehouse Receipts Law, is hereby repealed. Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order,

letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to or inconsistent with any provision of this Act is hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,