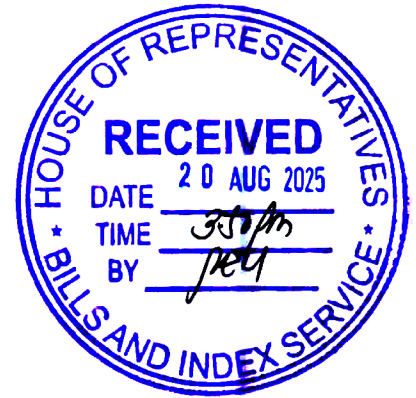


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL No. 3923

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. RENEE LOUISE M. CO**

AN ACT
REORGANIZING THE FIELD OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON
ELECTIONS BY UPGRADING AND CREATING CERTAIN POSITIONS,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 53 OF BATAS PAMBANSA 881,
OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE “OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE,” AS
AMENDED, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For decades, the principle of “equal pay for equal work” has not been felt by employees of the Constitutional body, Commission on Elections (COMELEC). The COMELEC constitutes around 6,000 employees nationwide, the majority of whom are from the rank-and-file receiving a mid- to low-level income. These employees express great dismay at the glaring disparity of their current salaries compared to fellow government employees with similar qualifications in other agencies, as well as other Constitutional bodies. Thus, in 2012, the COMELEC Employees’ Union (COMELEC-EU) was organized to lobby for substantial and just salary increases for election workers, among other purposes.

In their research and consultations, the COMELEC-EU found that the disparity in their salary schedule, which dates back to the 1990s, as opposed to those in other agencies ranges from three to five salary grades (SG).

COMELEC lawyers, accountants, statisticians, and other professionals receive less than their counterparts in other agencies and it is only in COMELEC where they are classified as rank-and-file. For instance, COMELEC lawyers (Attorney II, Election Officers for cities, and Provincial Election Supervisors), are in SG 18, SG 21,

or SG 24, receiving ₱51,304, ₱70,013 or ₱98,185 monthly, respectively. On the other hand, the Public Attorney's Office gives SG 25 to SG 29 (₱111,727 to ₱180,492) to its Public Attorneys (PA I to PA V), while clerks of court in the Regional Trial Courts are at SG 24 to SG 26 (₱98,185 to ₱126,252).

The duties and jurisdiction of Provincial Election Supervisors, who manage areas with half a million to a million voters, make them roughly equivalent to Division Superintendents in the Department of Education (DepEd). The former are at SG 24 (₱98,185 per month) while the latter are at SG 26 (₱126,252). Election Officers (EOs) manage areas with 20,000 to 400,000 voters, making them similarly situated with DepEd's District Supervisors (DSs). COMELEC's EOs are at SG 12 (₱32,245) while DepEd's DSs are at SG 22 (₱78,162).

Every step of the election process, from voters' registration to the canvassing of votes, is carried out all year round, so COMELEC employees toil all year round. They work even harder during the four-month-long election season, and are additionally saddled by flawed automation. Furthermore, their duties and functions, especially the field officers, have drastically evolved due to the developments in the Philippine electoral landscape. This demand on the field officers to continuously learn, acquire new skills, and take on tasks apart from their existing ones for the success of every election merits the upgrading of their salary.

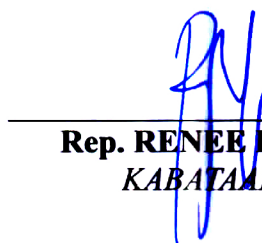
In a society where prices of the basic goods and services continuously increase, a livable compensation to COMELEC employees must be given for them to cope up with the soaring cost of living in the country. It is unjust that poll workers—the very backbone of the democratic exercise—are rewarded by the government with salaries disproportionate to their vital roles.

Answering COMELEC employees' call for decent salaries will also help insulate them from graft and corruption during elections, and compensate them for the risks they are forced to take due to election violence. This particular measure is supported by the COMELEC-EU, and was also approved on Third Reading in the 18th Congress.

The campaign of COMELEC employees for just salaries that will enable them to provide decent lives for themselves and their families has gone unanswered for far too long—just as in the case of public school teachers, the rest of the civilian bureaucracy, and workers in the private sector. Therefore, the passage of this Bill is earnestly sought.



Rep. ANTONIO L. TINIO
ACT Teachers Party-List



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AMENDED, AND PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR

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

Section 1. Section 53 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 881, otherwise known as the “Omnibus Election Code,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

Sec. 53. Field offices of the Commission. – The Commission shall have the following field offices:

[(1) Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election Director and assisted by the Assistant Regional Director and such other subordinate officers or employees as the Commission may appoint.

(2) Provincial Election Office, headed by the Provincial Election Supervisor and assisted by such other subordinate officers or employees as the Commission may appoint.

(3) City/Municipal Election Office, headed by the City/Municipal Registrar who shall be assisted by an election clerk and such other employees as the Commission may appoint.]

(1) OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL ELECTION DIRECTOR FOR ALL REGIONS INCLUDING THE NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

POSITION	SALARY GRADE
REGIONAL ELECTION DIRECTOR	28
ASSISTANT REGIONAL ELECTION DIRECTOR	27
REGIONAL ELECTION ATTORNEY	25
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER	21
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	18
BUDGET OFFICER	18
FINANCE OFFICER	18
STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER III	13
PROCESS SERVER	9
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE III	9
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE I	7
WATCHMAN OFFICER	7
DRIVER	7

(2) OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION DIRECTOR

POSITION	SALARY GRADE
PROVINCIAL ELECTION DIRECTOR	25/26
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	18
COMPUTER MAINTENANCE TECHNOLOGIST	17
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE I	7
DRIVER	7

(3) OFFICE OF THE CITY/MUNICIPAL ELECTION DIRECTOR

POSITION	SALARY GRADE
ELECTION SPECIALIST II	18
ELECTION SPECIALIST I	15
MUNICIPAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR (in the municipalities)	24
CITY ELECTION DIRECTOR I (in component cities)	25
CITY ELECTION DIRECTOR II (in the NCR and Highly Urbanized Cities)	26
ELECTION SPECIALIST/COMPUTER MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN (CMT) I	15
ELECTION SPECIALIST/COMPUTER MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN (CMT) II	18

The Commission may delegate its powers and functions or order the implementation or enforcement of its orders, rulings, or decisions through the heads of its field offices.

Section 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations. Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the COMELEC, in coordination with the Department of Budget and Management, shall issue the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

Section 3. Appropriations. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the COMELEC under the current General Appropriations Act. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

Section 4. Repealing Clause. All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, presidential proclamations, letters of implementation, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 5. 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,