



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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **4247**



Introduced by Representatives Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, Yedda Marie K. Romualdez, Andrew Julian K. Romualdez and Jude A. Acidre

AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING BY QUALIFIED SENIOR
CITIZENS, PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, LAWYERS, AND HUMAN
RESOURCES FOR HEALTH IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Elections are a cornerstone of democratic participation, yet certain groups face unique challenges in exercising their right to vote. Senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) often encounter physical and health-related barriers on election day, while professionals such as lawyers and human health workers have critical responsibilities that may limit their availability to vote. These challenges can inadvertently disenfranchise these sectors, undermining their full participation in the electoral process.

This bill seeks to address these concerns by allowing senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human health resources to vote early in both national and local elections. For senior citizens and PWDs, early voting accommodates their physical and health conditions, ensuring safer and more convenient access to polling. For lawyers and health workers, early voting acknowledges their essential roles in maintaining public order and health, allowing them to fulfill professional duties without compromising their right to vote.

By institutionalizing early voting for these groups, the bill promotes inclusivity, safeguards public welfare, and strengthens the democratic process by facilitating the participation of those who serve critical functions in society.

This measure was also filed during the 19th Congress and was primarily referred to the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, where it was approved on third and final reading by the House of Representatives.

In view of the foregoing, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.



FERDINAND MARTIN G. ROMUALDEZ



YEDDA MARIE K. ROMUALDEZ



ANDREW JULIAN K. ROMUALDEZ



JUDE A. ACIDRE



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

SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to make voting convenient for senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), lawyers, and human resources for health by giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set for the elections.

SEC. 2. *Early Voting.* – In consideration of their respective physical and health conditions, senior citizens and PWDs shall be allowed to vote early in national and local elections. Similarly, in consideration of the necessity of providing professional services and ensuring the health and safety of the populace during

election day, lawyers and human resources for health, respectively, shall be allowed to vote early in national and local elections.

For the purposes of this Act, the term “*human resources for health*” shall refer to those who are engaged in health and health-related work, and all persons employed in all hospitals, sanitarium, health infirmaries, health centers, rural health units, barangay health stations, clinics and other health-related establishments owned and operated by the Government or its political subdivisions with original charters and shall include medical, allied health professional, administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their employment status who physically report to the frontlines during the day of the election.

SEC. 3. *Registration.* There shall be a nationwide registration for senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health to qualify them to avail of this early voting privilege. Those who are not registered under this Act shall vote on Election Day.

SEC. 4. *Obligations of the Commission on Elections.* To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the Commission on Elections shall:

- (a) Keep a record of senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health who are registered voters;
- (b) Design a registration system, in coordination with local government units, the National Council on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the Bar Confidant of the Supreme Court, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Department of Health, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government for senior citizens,

PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health in order to facilitate their early voting;

(c) Ensure that polling places are safe and accessible to senior citizens and PWDs, and properly fitted with the necessary communication, visual and physical aids, as mandated under Republic Act No. 10366 entitled, “An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens”; and

(d) Mount an intensive information campaign on early voting for qualified senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health.

SEC. 5. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. *Applicability of Other Laws.* – The provisions of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881 or the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166, entitled, “An Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations Therefor, and for Other Purposes”, and other election laws not inconsistent herewith shall be applied to facilitate early voting for qualified senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from its effectivity, the Commission shall promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – 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. 10. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,