



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City



TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4768

Introduced by Hon. Jonathan Keith T. Flores

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article V, Section 1 of the 1987 Constitution guarantees the right of suffrage to all qualified citizens. Yet, many sectors continue to encounter barriers in its exercise. Senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) face challenges due to mobility limitations and inadequate facilities despite the enactment of Republic Act No. 10366, which authorized the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to establish accessible polling places. Lawyers, who are often designated to serve as members of the Board of Canvassers or provide legal assistance during elections under the Omnibus Election Code (Batas Pambansa Blg. 881), and human resources for health, mandated to render essential medical services, are also frequently unable to cast their ballots.

To address these circumstances, this measure seeks to institutionalize early voting for senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health in both national and local elections. This proposal complements existing election laws, such as Republic Act No. 8189 or the "Voter's Registration Act of 1996," and the Omnibus Election Code, by ensuring that the right to vote is not hindered by physical conditions or mandatory public service obligations.

This bill was already passed on Third Reading in the House of Representatives during the 19th Congress. By establishing an early voting mechanism, this bill advances inclusivity, prevents disenfranchisement, and affirms the State's duty to ensure free, orderly, honest, and accessible elections for all.

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

JONATHAN KEITH T. FLORES
2nd District, Bukidnon





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

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.

SECTION 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, sanatoria, 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.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 4. *Obligation 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 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.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 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.

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

SECTION 9. Repealing Clause. All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, presidential proclamation, 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,

SECTION 10. Effectivity. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved.