

Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 4827**



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Introduced by: Kababaihan Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list  
Representative Iris Marie D. Montes

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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**

### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article V, Section 1 of the Philippine Constitutions provides that, "Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year and in the place wherein they propose to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage."

The right to suffrage is the essence of our democracy. As a means to increase participation by citizens who are otherwise prevented to vote, the country has enacted absentee voting laws. Presently, there are laws that allow absentee voting for Filipinos overseas, media practitioners, armed forces and police force. However, these still leave other groups disenfranchised due to their peculiar situation or the performance of their function during elections.


These include human resources for health (HRHs) or those who are engaged in health and health-related work; lawyers who serve as guardians of truth and the rule of law and an indispensable instruments in the fair and impartial administration of justice; and persons with disabilities (PWDs) and senior citizens who play a significant role in nation building.

All of these segments of our society need to be heard and their votes counted during elections. However, some of them may not be able to vote as they are stationed away from their residences to deliver essential health services; monitor the conduct of election; or due to disability issues and medical needs.

Hence, this measure provides for means for HRHs, lawyers, PWDs, and the elderly who are away from their residences on election days to vote on national elections in the precincts nearest to them subject to reasonable regulations by the Commission on Election.

This bill was approved by the House of Representatives during the previous Congress.

In view thereof, approval of this bill is earnestly requested.

  
**IRIS MARIE D. MONTES**  
Kababaihan Kabalikatan para sa Kapakanan  
at Kaunlaran ng Bayan (4K) Party-list

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*Be it enacted by the Senate and the 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 thereby shall remain in 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,*