



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 4865



Introduced by **Representative EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

In 2013, Republic Act No. 10366 was passed which authorized the Commission on Elections (“COMELEC”) to establish precincts exclusively assigned accessible polling places for voters who are persons with disabilities (“PWD”) and senior citizens. This landmark legislation provided an avenue for political participation for these voters, as this allows the provision of voting venues that are accessible and free from physical barriers.

However, the same voters, including pregnant women, still faced challenges during elections. In the 2025 midterm elections, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (“DSWD”) noted several accessibility gaps, such as the lack of medical aids, restrooms, and facilities to help those with mobility issues¹. Similar issues were experienced in several parts of the country.

This proposed legislative measure aims to expand Republic Act No. 10366, by explicitly recognizing pregnant women as a vulnerable group entitled to accessible polling places and related accommodations, and to further strengthen and clarify key provisions by requiring accessible polling places to possess essential features that guarantee the safety and convenience of the affected voters. Furthermore, under this bill, the COMELEC is given the authority to designate various venues, such as public schools, town halls, plazas, malls, civic and community centers, and similar spaces designed with special features to ensure the safety, comfort, and dignity of PWDs, pregnant women, and senior citizens.

¹ Bacia L. (May 2025). DSWD cites snags, gains in voting process for seniors, PWDs, *Inquirer*. Link: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2072460/dswd-cites-snags-and-gains-in-voting-process-for-seniors-pwds>

Senior citizens, PWDs, and pregnant women collectively represent a significant portion of registered voters. Ensuring their full and meaningful participation in our democratic processes is both a social responsibility and a fundamental exercise of inclusive governance.

In view of the foregoing, early and favorable consideration of this bill is earnestly sought.



REP. EDUARDO R. RAMA JR.
2nd District, City of Cebu



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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR SPECIAL PRECINCTS FOR QUALIFIED SENIOR CITIZENS,
PREGNANT WOMEN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES DURING THE
NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

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

1 **SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** — The State shall ensure that senior citizens,
2 pregnant women, and persons with disabilities are given the opportunity to exercise their right to
3 vote and participate in the election process with convenience. Towards this end, the State is
4 obligated to provide special precincts that are accessible to senior citizens, pregnant women, and
5 persons with disabilities.

6
7 **SECTION 2. Definition of Terms.** — As used in this Act, the following terms are defined
8 as follows:

- 9 a) Persons with Disabilities (“PWD”) refer to qualified voters who have long-term physical,
10 mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that, in interaction with various barriers, may
11 hinder their full and effective participation in the electoral processes on an equal basis
12 with others.
- 13 b) Pregnant Women refers to qualified voters who are pregnant at the time of the period for
14 early voting and during election day, regardless of the number of trimesters.
- 15 c) Senior Citizens refer to qualified voters who are sixty (60) years or older.

- 1 d) Special Precinct refers to the basic unit of territory established by the Commission on
2 Elections (“COMELEC”), which comprises accessible polling places for qualified senior
3 citizens, PWDs, and pregnant women.
4

5 **SECTION 3.** Section 2(j) of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read as
6 follows:
7 x x x
8

9 (j) Accessible polling place refers to the venue where the Board of Election Inspectors
10 (BEIs) conducts election-related proceedings and where the voters cast their votes. The
11 accessible polling place shall be located on the ground floor, preferably near the entrance
12 of the building **and in a shaded area readily accessible to public transportation,**
13 **medical aid, and clean restrooms, and** shall be free of any physical barriers and
14 provided with necessary services **and** assistive devices, **such as but not limited to**
15 **wheelchairs, ramps, and railings.**
16

17 **SECTION 4.** Section 5 of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read as follows:
18

19 SEC. 5. Record of Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens. – The Commission, **in**
20 **coordination with relevant national government agencies and local government**
21 **units,** shall keep an updated record of persons with disabilities, **pregnant women,** and
22 senior citizens who are registered as voters, which indicates the types of disability and the
23 assistance they need, to assist it in determining policy directions for more inclusive and
24 accessible electoral processes. The record shall be made accessible to concerned
25 government offices, accredited citizens’ arms, civil society monitoring groups and other
26 organizations which promote the rights of persons with disabilities and senior citizens,
27 subject to specific guidelines the Commission may promulgate to protect the privacy of
28 the individuals concerned.
29

30 **SECTION 5.** Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read as follows:
31 x x x
32

33 SEC. 9. Creation of **Special** Precincts for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens. –
34 The Commission is hereby authorized to establish **and designate special** precincts **in**
35 **accessible polling places,** exclusively for **the benefit and use by** persons with

1 disabilities, **pregnant women**, and senior citizens who, in their registration records,
2 manifest their intent to avail of their right to a separate precinct under this section.
3 Pursuant hereto, the Commission shall establish at least one (1) such precinct, assigned to
4 accessible polling places, for every voting center **with features that ensure the safety,**
5 **convenience, and comfort of the aforementioned voters.** Such precincts shall be
6 provided with assistive devices as well as the services of experts in assisting persons with
7 disabilities.

8
9 **SEC. 9(A). Creation of Accessible Polling Places. – Pursuant to the preceding**
10 **section, the COMELEC shall coordinate with the concerned local government**
11 **units to identify and authorize suitable facilities like public schools, malls, town**
12 **halls, plazas, or community centers that comply with accessibility standards. The**
13 **polling places are equipped with assistive devices and expert assistance to facilitate**
14 **voting in a comfortable and safe environment for voters who are PWDs, pregnant**
15 **women, and senior citizens.**

16
17 **SECTION 6. *Appropriations.*** — The initial amount for the implementation of this Act
18 shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations of the COMELEC. Funding thereafter
19 shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

20
21 **SECTION 7. *Interpretation and Applicability of Other Laws.***— Nothing herein shall be
22 interpreted as having the effect of amending the Omnibus Elections Code. Furthermore, Republic
23 Act No. 7166, also known as the “Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections
24 and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations therefor, and for other purposes, shall be
25 applied suppletory to this Act.

26 **SECTION 8. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** — Within ninety (90) days from the
27 effectivity of this Act, the COMELEC shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations,
28 specifically regarding the designation and creation of special precincts and formulating guidelines
29 on accessibility for polling places.

30
31 **SECTION 9. *Separability Clause.***— If, for any reason, any section of this Act shall be
32 deemed unconstitutional and invalid, the other sections or provisions hereof shall not be affected
33 and shall remain in force and effect.

1 **SECTION 10. *Repealing Clause.*** — All laws, executive orders, decrees, instructions,
2 rules, and regulations, contrary to or inconsistent with any provisions of this Act, are repealed or
3 amended accordingly.

4
5 **SECTION 16. *Effectivity.***-. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication
6 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

7
8 Approved,