



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5465**

Introduced by **Representative MA. RENE ANN LOURDES G. MATIBAG**

AN ACT

**INSTITUTIONALIZING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND FAIR CAMPAIGNING
POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ALL ELECTIONS, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR
VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

Explanatory Note

This bill seeks to institutionalize the anti-discrimination and fair campaigning guidelines first promulgated by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) under Resolution No. 11116, issued in preparation for the May 2025 National and Local Elections.

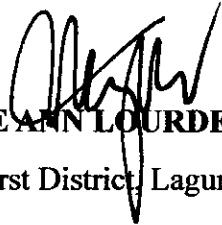
Said Resolution emphasized the need for free, orderly, honest, peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections by prohibiting discriminatory, harassing, and unfair campaign practices. However, incidents during the 2025 elections underscored the necessity of a permanent legislative framework.

Among these were documented cases of sexist and misogynistic remarks directed at women candidates and supporters, online harassment based on gender and marital status, and the exclusion of persons with disabilities (PWDs) from campaign activities due to lack of accessibility. Incidents of “red-tagging” or false labeling of candidates and supporters as subversives or terrorists, as well as vilification of marginalized groups such as LGBTQIA+ persons, also contributed to a climate of intimidation and fear.

By enacting this measure, the State shall provide clear and enforceable standards to protect the rights and dignity of all election stakeholders. This Act aims to eliminate discrimination,

harassment, intimidation, and other practices that undermine equal participation, thereby strengthening democratic values of inclusivity, fairness, and respect.

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



Rep. MA. RENE ANN LOURDES G. MATIBAG

First District, Laguna



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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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5485
HOUSE BILL NO. _____

Introduced by **Representative MA. RENE ANN LOURDES G. MATIBAG**

**AN ACT INSTITUTIONALIZING ANTI-DISCRIMINATION AND FAIR
CAMPAIGNING POLICIES AND PRACTICES IN ALL ELECTIONS, PROVIDING
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* This Act shall be known as the “Anti-Discrimination and Fair Campaigning Act of 2025.”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* It is hereby declared the policy of the State to safeguard the conduct of free, orderly, honest, peaceful, inclusive, and credible elections. The State affirms the inherent dignity and equal rights of all persons, and shall prohibit and penalize all forms of discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or coercion that undermine electoral participation.

SECTION 3. *Coverage.* This Act shall apply to all national and local elections, plebiscites, referenda, recall elections, and related campaign activities.

SECTION 4. *Definition of Terms.* For purposes of this Act, the following terms are hereby defined and shall be understood as follows:

- a. **Candidate** – as defined under existing election laws, including party-list organizations that have filed a manifestation of intent to participate and are not disqualified.
- b. **Cause-Oriented Groups** – organizations representing marginalized or vulnerable sectors such as indigenous peoples, women, LGBTQIA+ persons, PWDs, and persons living with HIV.

- c. **Coercion** – any act of violence, threat, or intimidation that prevents a person from exercising electoral rights or compels action against one’s will.
- d. **Discrimination Against Women** – any gender-based distinction, exclusion, or restriction impairing women’s equal participation in elections, consistent with CEDAW principles.
- e. **Discrimination Against PWDs** – denial or unequal provision of access to campaign venues, materials, and activities on account of disability.
- f. **Election Period** – as defined by law and COMELEC regulations.
- g. **Gender-Based Harassment** – unwanted, uninvited sexual or sexist acts or remarks, whether physical, verbal, written, or online, including but not limited to stalking, impersonation, dissemination of sexual content, or persistent misogynistic or homophobic conduct.
- h. **Labeling/Red-Tagging** – branding or associating candidates, parties, or supporters as criminals, terrorists, or subversives without clear and convincing evidence, whether offline or online.
- i. **Public Ridicule or Vilification of PWDs** – acts that mock, degrade, or incite contempt against persons with disability.
- j. **Violation of Rights to Cultural and Religious Sites** – desecration or obstruction of access to sites, ceremonies, or artifacts of indigenous cultural communities in the context of elections.

SECTION 5. *Prohibited Acts.* It shall be unlawful for any person, whether acting individually or through an organization, to commit any of the following during the election period:

1. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation on the basis of sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, HIV status, ethnicity, religion, or similar status.
2. Discriminatory practices that deny equal access to campaign venues, communication platforms, or participation in election-related activities.
3. The use of misogynistic, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, or other derogatory remarks against candidates, supporters, or voters.
4. Labeling, branding, or associating candidates, political parties, or supporters as criminals, terrorists, or subversives without clear and convincing evidence.
5. Public ridicule, vilification, or contempt directed at PWDs or any marginalized group.
6. Desecration, obstruction, or misuse of cultural or religious sites or ceremonies of indigenous peoples for political purposes.

7. Violation of duly enacted local anti-discrimination ordinances in connection with election activities.

SECTION 6. *Commission of Offenses.* Violations under this Act may be committed through speech, writing, broadcast, online platforms, campaign materials, or any medium of communication.

SECTION 7. *Investigation and Enforcement.* The Commission on Elections (COMELEC), with concurrent jurisdiction by the Department of Justice (DOJ), shall investigate and prosecute violations of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Filing and Monitoring of Cases.*

(a) Any person may file a complaint for violations under this Act before the COMELEC or appropriate prosecutorial offices.

(b) COMELEC shall maintain a public registry of cases filed and shall issue periodic reports to ensure transparency.

(c) All cases arising during the campaign period shall be given priority to preserve electoral integrity.

SECTION 9. *Penalties.* Any person found guilty of committing any of the prohibited acts under this Act shall be held liable for an election offense, without prejudice to prosecution under other applicable laws.

The following penalties shall apply:

a. Bullying, harassment, or intimidation on the basis of protected status shall be punished with imprisonment of one (1) year to three (3) years, and a fine of not less than ₱100,000 but not more than ₱300,000.

b. Gender-based harassment, including misogynistic, sexist, homophobic, or transphobic acts or remarks, shall be punished with imprisonment of one (1) year to six (6) years, and a fine of not less than ₱100,000 but not more than ₱500,000.

c. Discrimination against PWDs by denying or restricting access to campaign events, venues, or materials, shall be punished with imprisonment of six (6) months to two (2) years, and a fine of not less than ₱50,000 but not more than ₱200,000.

d. Labeling or red-tagging of candidates, political parties, or supporters without clear and convincing evidence shall be punished with imprisonment of two (2) years to six (6) years, and a fine of not less than ₱200,000 but not more than ₱600,000.

e. Public ridicule or vilification of PWDs or marginalized groups shall be punished with imprisonment of six (6) months to two (2) years, and a fine of not less than ₱50,000 but not more than ₱150,000.

f. Desecration or obstruction of religious or cultural sites and ceremonies of indigenous peoples shall be punished with imprisonment of two (2) years to six (6) years, and a fine of not less than ₱200,000 but not more than ₱500,000.

g. Violation of local Anti-Discrimination Ordinances in relation to elections shall be punished with the penalties prescribed under said ordinance, or, if none, imprisonment of six (6) months to one (1) year, and a fine of not less than ₱50,000 but not more than ₱100,000.

Additional Sanctions:

1. If the offender is a candidate, political party, or campaign official, he or she shall also be subject to disqualification from holding public office or from running in any future election for a period of five (5) years.

2. If the offender is a public official or employee, he or she shall also be subject to perpetual disqualification from holding public office, without prejudice to administrative liability.

3. If the offense is committed through mass media, online platforms, or digital networks, liability shall likewise extend to the authors, publishers, broadcasters, and responsible officers of media or platform providers who knowingly allow or tolerate the dissemination of such acts.

SECTION 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).* Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), in consultation with the Department of Justice (DOJ), the Commission on Human Rights (CHR), the Philippine Commission on Women (PCW), the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), and duly accredited civil society organizations, shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

The IRR shall include, but not be limited to:

a. Clear procedures for the filing, investigation, and resolution of complaints under this Act;

b. Guidelines on evidence gathering, including the treatment of online and digital media as admissible evidence;

c. Coordination protocols among COMELEC, DOJ, law enforcement agencies, and other relevant bodies to ensure efficient enforcement;

d. Education and information campaigns for candidates, political parties, campaign personnel, media, and the general public; and

e. Monitoring and reporting mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability in the handling of cases.

SECTION 11. *Separability Clause.* If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain valid and in full force.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Effectivity.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,