



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 5738



Introduced by CIBAC Party-List Representative
EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The integrity and inclusiveness of the electoral process begins with a clean, complete, permanent, and updated list of voters. However, despite the advent of automated elections, our voter registration system remains heavily dependent on manual and in-person processes, often resulting in inefficiencies, disenfranchisement, and logistical difficulties—particularly for Filipinos in remote areas, senior citizens, persons with disabilities, overseas workers, and those with time or mobility constraints.

This legislative measure, which has already been approved on Third Reading in the House of Representatives, seeks to modernize and streamline the voter registration process by amending Republic Act No. 8189 or the Voter’s Registration Act of 1996. It introduces a secure, technology-enabled system of online voter registration, without eliminating the existing option for in-person registration. This ensures both accessibility and integrity in maintaining the national voter database.

The key provisions of the bill include:

- a) Institutionalizing online application for registration, including reactivation, transfer, and correction of voter records;
- b) Establishing clear guidelines for valid proofs of residence, such as utility bills or sworn affidavits;
- c) Mandating the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to adopt data protection, authentication, and transparency measures in the implementation of online systems;
- d) Enhancing the centralized and digitized storage of voter registration records;
- e) Strengthening mechanisms for cancellation of deceased voters’ records in coordination with the Philippine Statistics Authority;
- f) Providing cost waivers for COMELEC when it files exclusion cases in court;
- g) Penalizing illegal transfers of voter registration and other violations of the Act.

This measure also recognizes the realities of digital governance and supports the national objectives of digital transformation, voter education, and increased

electoral participation. By simplifying voter registration and removing unnecessary barriers, it empowers citizens—especially the youth and marginalized groups—to exercise their right to suffrage.

Grounded in the Constitutional mandate to ensure free, orderly, honest, and credible elections (Article IX-C), this bill strengthens the foundation of our democratic process through accessible, efficient, and secure voter registration.

Its passage into law is a crucial step toward ensuring that every qualified Filipino has the opportunity—and the means—to register and vote.


EDUARDO “BRO. EDDIE” C. VILLANUEVA



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AN ACT

STRENGTHENING THE PROCEDURE FOR REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AND ADOPTING A SYSTEM OF ONLINE REGISTRATION, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTIONS 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 22, 23, 24, 29, 32, 33 AND 45 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8189, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE "VOTER'S REGISTRATION ACT OF 1996"

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

1 **SECTION 1.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 8189, otherwise known as "The
2 Voter's Registration Act of 1996", is hereby amended to read as follows:

3
4 "SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy. - It is the policy of the State to [systematize
5 the present method of registration in order to establish a clean, complete,
6 permanent, and updated list of voters] **ESTABLISH A SYSTEM OF**
7 **REGISTRATION THAT ENSURES AND GUARANTEES A CLEAN,**
8 **COMPLETE, PERMANENT, AND UPDATED LIST OF VOTERS. TO**
9 **ENCOURAGE AND ENSURE A CONTINUING SYSTEM OF VOTER**
10 **REGISTRATION, THE STATE SHALL ADOPT AND MAKE USE OF**
11 **TECHNOLOGIES THAT SHALL FACILITATE AND ALLOW THE**
12 **AUTOMATED AND ONLINE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS AS AN**
13 **OPTION, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE INTEGRITY, COMPLETENESS,**
14 **AND ACCURACY OF THE LIST OF VOTERS."**

15
16 **SEC. 2.** Section 3 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

17
18 "SEC. 3. Definition of Terms. - As used in this Act:
19 (a) Registration refers to the act of accomplishing and filing of a sworn
20 application for registration by a qualified voter **ONLINE OR** before the
21 election officer of the city or municipality wherein [he] **THE APPLICANT**
22 resides and including the same in the book of registered voters upon

1 approval by the Election Registration Board. **REGISTRATION LIKEWISE**
2 **REFERS TO OTHER PROCESSES ATTENDANT TO BEING A**
3 **QUALIFIED VOTER SUCH AS THE REACTIVATION OF VOTER**
4 **REGISTRATION RECORDS, TRANSFER OF VOTER REGISTRATION**
5 **RECORDS, AND CORRECTION OF ENTRIES THEREIN.**

6
7 x x x

8
9 (n) Election Officer refers to the highest official or authorized representative
10 of the Commission in a city or municipality; [and]

11
12 (o) Board of Election Inspectors refers to the body which conducts the
13 election in the polling place of the precinct usually composed of three (3)
14 public school teachers appointed by the Commission [,]; **AND**

15
16 **(p) DISINTERESTED WITNESS REFERS TO A REGISTERED VOTER IN**
17 **THE SAME BARANGAY WHERE THE APPLICANT SEEKS TO**
18 **REGISTER AND WHO RESIDES THEREAT, ATTESTING TO A CERTAIN**
19 **FACT, THE IDENTITY, PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND**
20 **RESIDENCE OF THE APPLICANT, BUT HAS NO PERSONAL**
21 **ADVANTAGE OR DISADVANTAGE ON THE APPROVAL OR**
22 **DISAPPROVAL OF THE APPLICANT'S VOTER REGISTRATION. A**
23 **DISINTERESTED WITNESS SHOULD NOT BE RELATED TO THE**
24 **APPLICANT WITHIN THE FOURTH (4TH) CIVIL DEGREE OF**
25 **CONSANGUINITY OR AFFINITY: PROVIDED, HOWEVER, THAT NO**
26 **DISINTERESTED WITNESS SHALL BE ALLOWED TO IDENTIFY MORE**
27 **THAN THREE (3) APPLICANTS."**

28
29 **SEC. 3.** Section 8 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

30
31 "SEC. 8. System of Continuing Registration of Voters. - The personal **OR**
32 **ELECTRONIC** filing of application [of] FOR registration of voters shall be
33 conducted daily in the office of the Election Officer during regular office
34 hours **OR THROUGH THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE COMMISSION.**
35 No registration shall, however, be conducted during the period starting
36 **WITHIN** one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election and ninety
37 (90) days before a special election."

38
39 **SEC. 4.** Section 9 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

40
41 "SEC. 9. Who may register. - All citizens of the Philippines not otherwise
42 disqualified by law who are at least eighteen (18) years of age, and who
43 shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one (1) year, and in the
44 [place] BARANGAY wherein they propose to vote, for at least six (6) months
45 immediately preceding the election, may register as a voter [,]; **PROVIDED**
46 **HOWEVER, THAT A PERSON SHALL BE ALLOWED TO REGISTER BY**
47 **PRESENTING ANY VALID PROOF OF RESIDENCE, SUCH AS THE**
48 **FOLLOWING:**

- 1 **A. TAX DECLARATION OR PROOF OF PAYMENT OF REAL**
2 **PROPERTY TAX, OR A CERTIFICATION FROM THE LANDOWNER**
3 **OR LESSOR OF RESIDENTIAL UNIT, APARTMENT, CONDOMINIUM,**
4 **DORMITORY OR SIMILAR DWELLING UNITS WHERE THE**
5 **APPLICANT IS RESIDING AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION;**
6 **B. A RECENT HOUSEHOLD UTILITY BILL FOR GAS, ELECTRIC,**
7 **WATER, TELEPHONE, CABLE, OR INTERNET CONSUMPTION, OR**
8 **A STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT FOR MOBILE PHONE**
9 **SUBSCRIPTION OR CREDIT CARD, UNDER THE APPLICANT'S**
10 **NAME;**
11 **C. AFFIDAVIT OF AT LEAST TWO DISINTERESTED WITNESSES AS**
12 **DEFINED IN SECTION 3 OF THIS ACT THAT THE APPLICANT IS A**
13 **RESIDENT OF THE PLACE OF REGISTRATION; OR**
14 **D. OTHER COMPETENT PROOFS OF RESIDENCE DECIDED UPON**
15 **AND PROMULGATED BY THE COMMISSION.**
16

17 Any person who temporarily resides in another city, municipality
18 **BARANGAY or ANOTHER** country solely by reason of [his] **ONE'S**
19 occupation, profession, employment in private or public service, educational
20 activities, work in the military or naval reservations within the Philippines,
21 service in the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the National Police Forces,
22 or confinement or detention in government institutions in accordance with
23 law, shall not be deemed to have lost [his] **THE** original residence.
24

25 x x x "

26
27 **SEC. 5.** Section 10 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
28

29 "SEC. 10. Registration of Voters. - A qualified voter shall be registered in
30 the permanent list of voters in a precinct of the city or municipality [wherein
31 he] **WHERE THE VOTER** resides to be able to vote in any election. To
32 register as a voter, [he] **THE APPLICANT** shall personally **OR**
33 **ELECTRONICALLY** accomplish an application form for registration as
34 prescribed by the Commission [in three (3) copies before the Election
35 Officer] **AND PERSONALLY SUBMIT THE ACCOMPLISHED FORM TO**
36 **THE OFFICE OF THE ELECTION OFFICER OF THE CITY OR**
37 **MUNICIPALITY WHERE THE VOTER RESIDES on any date during**
38 **office hours, OR THROUGH THE OFFICIAL WEBSITE OF THE**
39 **COMMISSION** [after having acquired the qualifications of a voter].
40

41 x x x

42
43 The application for registration [shall contain three (3) specimen signatures
44 of the applicant, clear and legible rolled prints of his left and right
45 thumbprints, with four (4) identification size copies of his latest photograph,
46 attached thereto, to be taken at the expense of the Commission] **MAY BE**
47 **SUBMITTED PERSONALLY OR ELECTRONICALLY AND SHALL BE**
48 **PROCESSED IN ACCORDANCE WITH REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10367**

1 **ENTITLED "AN ACT PROVIDING FOR MANDATORY BIOMETRICS**
2 **VOTER REGISTRATION" AT THE EXPENSE OF THE COMMISSION.**
3

4 Before the applicant accomplishes [his] THE application for registration, the
5 Election Officer shall inform [him] THE APPLICANT of the qualifications and
6 disqualifications prescribed by law for a voter, and thereafter, see to it that
7 the accomplished application contains all the data therein required and that
8 the applicant's specimen signatures, fingerprints, and photographs are
9 properly affixed in [all copies of] the voter's application.
10

11 **IN CASE OF ONLINE SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION FOR**
12 **REGISTRATION BY AN APPLICANT, THE COMMISSION SHALL SEND**
13 **A NOTICE CONFIRMING ITS RECEIPT OF THE APPLICATION AND**
14 **PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW THE APPLICANT MAY CHECK**
15 **THE STATUS OF THE APPLICATION. FURTHERMORE, THE**
16 **COMMISSION SHALL EMPLOY DATA SECURITY MEASURES WHICH**
17 **ARE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE ACCURACY AND INTEGRITY OF**
18 **ELECTRONICALLY SUBMITTED VOTER REGISTRATION**
19 **APPLICATIONS."**
20

21 **SEC. 6.** Section 12 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
22

23 "SEC. 12. Change of Residence to another [City or Municipality]
24 **BARANGAY.** - Any registered voter who has transferred residence to
25 another city or municipality] **BARANGAY** may apply with the Election Officer
26 of [his] **THE CITY OR MUNICIPALITY IN WHICH THE VOTER'S** new
27 residence **IS LOCATED** for the transfer of [his] **THE VOTER'S** registration
28 records.
29

30 **NO TRANSFER OF A VOTER'S REGISTRATION TO ANOTHER**
31 **BARANGAY SHALL BE ALLOWED WITHIN ONE HUNDRED TWENTY**
32 **(120) DAYS BEFORE A REGULAR ELECTION AND NINETY (90) DAYS**
33 **BEFORE A SPECIAL ELECTION.**
34

35 The application for transfer of registration shall be subject to the
36 requirements of notice and hearing and the approval of the Election
37 Registration Board, in accordance with this Act. Upon approval of the
38 application for transfer, and after notice of such approval to the Election
39 Officer of the former residence of the voter, said Election Officer shall
40 transmit by registered mail OR OTHER MODES OF SAFE, SECURE AND
41 FAST TRANSMISSION the voter's registration record to the Election Officer
42 of the voter's new residence."
43

44 **SEC. 7.** Section 13 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
45

46 "SEC. 13. Change of Address [in the same city or municipality]. - Any voter
47 who has changed [his] address [in the same city or municipality] **WHICH**
48 **SHALL NOT FALL UNDER A CHANGE IN BARANGAY AS PROVIDED**

1 **FOR UNDER SECTION 12 OF THIS ACT** shall immediately notify the
2 Election Officer in writing. If the change of address involves a change in
3 precinct, the Board shall transfer [his] **THE** new precinct and notify the voter
4 of [his] **THE** new precinct. All changes of address shall be reported to the
5 office of the provincial election supervisor and the Commission in Manila.”

6
7 **SEC. 8.** Section 22 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
8

9 "SEC. 22. Preservation of Voter's Registration Records. - The Election
10 Officer shall compile the [original] copies of the approved applications for
11 registration per precinct, [and] arrange the same alphabetically according to
12 surname [. He shall] **AND** preserve the book of voters and ensure its
13 integrity. [The second and third copies of the registration records] **THE**
14 **COPY OF THE APPROVED APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION SHALL**
15 **BE SCANNED BY THE ELECTION OFFICER AND THE SCANNED COPY**
16 shall be sent to the provincial and national central files within [three (3)] **FIVE**
17 **(5)** days after the approval of the Board.

18
19 **ALL APPROVED APPLICATIONS FILED DURING THE REGISTRATION**
20 **PERIOD IN THE LOCAL VOTER'S DATABASE SHALL BE EXTRACTED**
21 **AND STORED IN A UNIVERSAL SERIAL BUS (USB) OR OTHER**
22 **STORAGE DEVICES AND SENT TO THE APPROPRIATE OFFICE OF**
23 **THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION SUPERVISOR AND TO THE**
24 **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DEPARTMENT OF THE COMMISSION."**

25
26 **SEC. 9.** Section 23 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
27

28 "SEC. 23. Provincial File. - There shall be a provincial file consisting of the
29 [duplicate] **SCANNED** copies of all registration records in each precinct of
30 every city and municipality in the province. It shall be in the custody of the
31 Provincial Election Supervisor and shall be compiled and arranged by
32 precinct, by municipality and alphabetically by surnames of voters.

33
34 **SEC. 10.** Section 24 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
35

36 "SEC. 24. National Central File. - There shall be a national central file under
37 the custody of the Commission in Manila consisting of the [third] **SCANNED**
38 copies of all approved voter registration records in each city or municipality.
39 It shall be compiled by precinct in each city [/] OR municipality and arranged
40 alphabetically by **DATE OF BOARD HEARING** surname so as to make the
41 file replica of the book of voters in the possession of the Election Officer.
42 Thereafter a national list shall be prepared following the alphabetical
43 arrangements of surnames of voters].

44
45 [There shall be a national file consisting of the computerized voters' list
46 (CVL), both in print and in diskette,] **A COMPLETE FILE OF ALL**
47 **REGISTERED VOTERS SHALL BE** submitted by the Election Officers [in
48 OF each city and municipality concerned, under the custody of] TO the

Commission in Manila [.] **WHICH SHALL KEEP COPIES OF THESE FILES IN ITS COMPUTERIZED DATABASE AND PRINTED RECORDS, AND EXERCISE CUSTODIAL RESPONSIBILITY OVER THEM.**

SEC. 11. Section 29 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 29. Cancellation of Registration. - The Board shall cancel the registration records of those who have died as certified by the [Local Civil Registrar] **THE PHILIPPINE STATISTICS AUTHORITY (PSA) ON A QUARTERLY BASIS. THE PROCESSING FEES OF THE QUARTERLY CERTIFIED LIST OF PERSONS WHO DIED AS REQUESTED BY THE COMMISSION TO PSA SHALL BE WAIVED.** The [Local Civil Registrar] **PSA** shall submit each month a certified list of persons who died during the previous month to the Election Officer of the place where the deceased are registered. In the absence of information concerning the place where the deceased are registered, the list shall be sent to the Election Officer of the city or municipality of the deceased's residence as appearing in [his] **THE** death certificate. In any case, the [Local Civil Registrar] **PSA** shall furnish a copy of this list to the national central file and the proper provincial file.

THE PSA SHALL ENSURE THAT ITS DATA PRIVACY NOTICE SUFFICIENTLY INFORMS AFFECTED PARTIES THAT THEIR PERSONAL INFORMATION IS TO BE PROCESSED AND SHARED WITH THE COMMISSION TO ENABLE THE LATTER TO FULFILL ITS CONSTITUTIONAL MANDATE TO INITIATE VOTER INCLUSION AND EXCLUSION PROCEEDINGS AND TO ESTABLISH A CLEAN, COMPLETE, PERMANENT, AND UPDATED LIST OF VOTERS UNDER THIS ACT, AND AS ALLOWED BY SECTION 12(E) OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10173, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE DATA PRIVACY ACT OF 2012.

x x x "

SEC. 12. Section 32 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"SEC. 32. Common Rules Governing Judicial Proceedings in the Matter of Inclusion, Exclusion, and Correction of Names of Voters. –

x x x

(d) No cost [s] shall be assessed against any party in these proceedings. However, if the court should find that the application has been filed solely to harass [the adverse party] and cause him] **THE ADVERSE PARTY** to incur expenses, it shall order the culpable party to pay the costs and incidental expenses. **NO COST SHALL LIKEWISE BE ASSESSED AGAINST THE COMMISSION WHEN IT FILES A PETITION FOR EXCLUSION;**

x x x"

1
2 **SEC. 13.** Section 33 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
3

4 "SEC. 33. Jurisdiction in Inclusion and Exclusion Case. - The Municipal and
5 Metropolitan Trial Courts shall have original and exclusive jurisdiction over
6 all cases of inclusion and exclusion of voters in their respective cities or
7 municipalities]:

8 **PROVIDED, THAT WHEN THE COMMISSION IS THE PETITIONER OF A**
9 **CASE ON EXCLUSION OF VOTERS, FILING AND OTHER COURT FEES**
10 **SHALL BE WAIVED.** Decisions of the Municipal or Metropolitan Trial
11 Courts may be appealed by the aggrieved party to the Regional Trial Court
12 within five (5) days from receipt of notice thereof. Otherwise, said decision
13 shall become final and executory. The regional trial court shall decide the
14 appeal within ten (10) days from the time it is received and the decision shall
15 immediately become final and executory. No motion for reconsideration
16 shall be entertained.
17

18 **SEC. 14.** Section 45 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:
19

20 "SEC. 45. Election Offenses. - The following shall be considered election
21 offenses under this Act:
22

23 x x x
24

25 (i) The posting of a list of voters outside or at the door of a precinct on the
26 day of an election, plebiscite, referendum, initiative and/or recall, and which
27 list is different in contents from the certified list of voters being used by the
28 Board of Election Inspectors; [and]
29

30 j) Violation of the provisions of this Act] THE TRANSFER OF A VOTER'S
31 REGISTRATION OF RESIDENCE CONTRARY TO THE PROVISIONS OF
32 SECTION 12 OF THIS ACT; AND
33

34 (k) VIOLATION OF ANY OTHER PROVISIONS OF THIS ACT.
35

36 **SEC. 15. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary for the initial implementation
37 of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the
38 Commission on Elections. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual
39 General Appropriations Act.
40

41 **SEC. 16. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days from
42 the effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Elections, in consultation with the
43 Department of Information and Communications Technology, Department of Science
44 and Technology, Department of the Interior and Local Government, National
45 Commission for Senior Citizens, and other stakeholders shall promulgate the rules
46 and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.
47

1 **SEC. 17. Separability Clause.** – If any portion of this Act is declared invalid or
2 unconstitutional, other provisions hereof shall remain in full force and effect.
3

4 **SEC. 18. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules, and regulations
5 or other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are
6 hereby repealed or modified accordingly.
7

8 **SEC. 19. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
9 publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.
10

11 *Approved,*