



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

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6280**



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Introduced by **Representative MA. VICTORIA CO-PILAR**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

In every election, countless Filipinos rise early, travel far, and stand in long lines in order to participate in their right to suffrage. Yet, there are those who, despite their dedication to public service are unable to do the same, not by choice, but because their duty remains a priority for them. They are doctors and nurses on hospital shifts, firefighters and disaster response teams on call, and government workers prioritizing essential operations. These are citizens who, while serving our democratic nation, are too often unable to participate in the very process that defines it: the act of voting.

This proposed legislation seeks to significantly expand the coverage of the **Local Absentee Voting (LAV)** system in the Philippines to uphold the constitutional right of suffrage for more citizens, especially those that keep the machinery of the government and society running even on election day.

The current laws primarily limit LAV to members of the Armed Forces, the Philippine National Police, government officers performing election duties, and media practitioners only. This Act addresses the disenfranchisement faced by a broader range of **qualified registered voters** who, despite their eligibility, are unable to cast their votes in their home precincts because their essential **public functions** require them to be away on election day. The measure achieves this by amending Republic Act No. 10380 and Section 12 of Republic Act No. 7166, explicitly replacing the restrictive lists of beneficiaries with a general provision extending the right to LAV to **all** qualified voters whose public service prevents them from voting.

Crucially, voters availing of this expanded right will still only be allowed to vote for national positions, namely President, Vice President, Senators, and Party-List Representative. By establishing this more inclusive framework, the State ensures that citizens performing vital public service—such as personnel in hospitals, disaster response teams, and other essential government operations—can participate fully in the democratic process without compromising their official duties. The Act mandates the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to issue the necessary rules, including a system for accreditation and verification, and authorizes the necessary appropriations for its effective implementation.

This Act redefines Local Absentee Voting not as a privilege for a few, but as a guarantee for all who serve. It is a recognition that democracy is strongest when every citizen has the capacity to exercise their right in shaping our nation’s destiny and with the capacity to exercise it along with their public service duties.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "S. Garcia", written in a cursive style.



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**AN ACT**

**PROVIDING FOR LOCAL ABSENTEE VOTING FOR ALL QUALIFIED VOTERS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10380, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING FOR LOCAL ABSENTEE VOTING FOR MEDIA AND SECTION 12 OF REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7166, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS AN ACT PROVIDING FOR SYNCHRONIZED NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS AND FOR ELECTORAL REFORMS, AUTHORIZING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

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

**SEC 1.** *Declaration of Policy.* - The State shall ensure the free exercise of the right of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law.

**SEC. 2.** Section 2 of Republic Act No. 10380, otherwise known as "Local Absentee Voting for Members of Media" is hereby amended to read as follows:

*"SEC. 2. Local Absentee Voting*  ~~*[for Members of Media]*~~ **FOR ALL QUALIFIED VOTERS** - The Commission on Elections shall extend the right to vote under the local absentee voting system provided under existing laws and executive orders to  ~~*[members of media, media practitioners, including the technical and support staff, who are duly]*~~ qualified registered voters who, on election day, may not be able to vote due to the performance of their **PUBLIC** functions  ~~*[in covering and*~~

~~reporting on the elections~~: Provided, That they shall be allowed to vote only for the positions of President, Vice President, Senators and Party-List Representative.”

**SEC. 3.** Section 12 of Republic Act No. 7166, otherwise known as “An Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations Therefor, And For Other Purposes” is hereby amended to read as follows:

**“Sec. 12. Absentee Voting.** – Absentee voting as provided for in Executive Order No. 157 dated March 30, 1987 shall apply to the elections for President, Vice-President and Senators only and shall be ~~[limited to members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police and other government officers and employees who are duly registered voters and who, on election day, may temporarily be assigned in connection with the performance of election duties to place where they are not registered voters]~~ **EXTENDED TO ALL QUALIFIED REGISTERED VOTERS WHO, ON ELECTION DAY, MAY NOT BE ABLE TO VOTE DUE TO THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR PUBLIC FUNCTIONS.”**

**SEC. 4. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – The Commission on Elections shall, within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations which shall include a system of accreditation and verification of ~~[the members of media, media practitioners, the technical and support staff,]~~ **ALL REGISTERED VOTERS** who are qualified to avail of local absentee voting.

**SEC. 5. *Appropriations.*** – The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year’s appropriations or from any available savings of the Commission on Elections. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 6. *Separability Clause.*** – If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

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

**SEC. 8. *Effectivity.*** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,