



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

**Twentieth Congress
1st Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 6824**



Introduced by Rep. Elisa “Olga” T. Kho

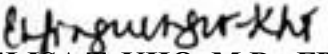
EXPLANATORY NOTE

This legislative proposal is rooted in the State's core obligation to ensure every citizen can safely and easily exercise their right to vote. Although the current framework, particularly Republic Act No. 10366, mandates the creation of Accessible Polling Places (APPs), the reality is that the sheer volume, congestion, and logistical strain of a single national election day still pose significant practical barriers for specific groups.

To address this, the bill introduces Early Voting, which functions as a strategic, multi-day logistical adjustment aimed at boosting voter turnout without sacrificing the integrity of the election. This measure is justified by two separate but equally vital needs: For Senior Citizens and PWDs, Early Voting is a critical health and physical accommodation, allowing them to bypass the exhausting queues and dense crowds of Election Day, thereby removing physical hurdles and reducing health risks.

For Lawyers and Human Resources for Health (HRH), it is a practical recognition of their essential service roles, as their professional duties—monitoring elections, providing medical aid—are often most crucial on the very day voting occurs. By creating a secure voting window of up to seven days before the main polls, the Act resolves the conflict between public service and civic duty, ultimately fostering a more inclusive democracy and strengthening overall national welfare.

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


REP. ELISA T. KHO, M.D., FPCCP



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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**

*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 "Early Voting for Vulnerable Sectors and Service Frontliners Act."

SECTION 2. Declaration of Policy.

It is hereby declared the policy of the State to uphold the constitutional right of suffrage and to ensure that all qualified citizens are able to exercise this right without discrimination or hindrance. The State shall, therefore, make voting more convenient and accessible for:

1. Senior Citizens and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), in consideration of their physical and health conditions; and
2. Lawyers and Human Resources for Health (HRH), in consideration of the necessity of their professional services and essential duties on Election Day.

SECTION 3. Early Voting Privilege.

In all national and local elections, there shall be a system of Early Voting where qualified citizens belonging to the sectors enumerated in Section 4 may choose to cast their ballot earlier than the date set for the regular election.

SECTION 4. Qualified Early Voters.

The privilege of Early Voting shall be granted to registered voters who are:

1. Senior Citizens as defined under Republic Act No. 9994 (Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010), as amended.
2. Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) as defined under Republic Act No. 7277 (Magna Carta for Disabled Persons), as amended.
3. Lawyers who are members of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) and whose services are indispensable on Election Day, including election lawyers, public attorneys, prosecutors, and judges who are required to report for duty.
4. Human Resources for Health (HRH), which shall refer to all persons engaged in health and health-related work, and all persons employed in all hospitals, sanitariums, health infirmaries, health centers, rural health units, barangay health stations, clinics, and other health-related establishments owned or operated by the government or private entities.

SECTION 5. Early Voting Period and Venues.

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) shall designate an Early Voting Period and Early Voting Venues, subject to the following guidelines:

1. Period: The Early Voting Period shall be conducted for a continuous period of seven (7) working days immediately preceding the day of the regular election.
2. Venues: The COMELEC shall designate safe, accessible, and secure establishments, such as City or Municipal Halls, sports complexes, or other accessible public or private buildings, as Early Voting Venues at every city or municipality across the country.

SECTION 6. Registration and Option to Vote Early.

There shall be a nationwide registration and express option for qualified citizens of the aforementioned sectors to avail of this Early Voting privilege.

1. The COMELEC shall coordinate with the National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA), the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA), the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP), the Department of Health (DOH), and other relevant government and non-government organizations to design a registration system.
2. The list of qualified early voters shall be strictly monitored to prevent any form of double voting. Those who are not registered under this Act for Early Voting shall vote with the rest of the eligible population on the regular Election Day.

SECTION 7. Obligations of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

To ensure the effective and secure implementation of this Act, the COMELEC shall:

1. Keep a complete and accurate record of all registered Early Voters;
2. Ensure that Early Voting Venues are fully compliant with the accessibility standards under Republic Act No. 10366, including the provision of necessary communication, visual, and physical aids;

3. Establish stringent security measures to protect the secrecy and sanctity of the ballots cast during the Early Voting Period, which shall be transported, kept, and counted only on the date set for the regular elections;
4. Mount an intensive and comprehensive public information and education campaign on the procedures and schedule for Early Voting.

SECTION 8. Applicability of Other Election Laws.

The provisions of Batas Pambansa Big. 881 (Omnibus Election Code), Republic Act No. 7166 (Electoral Reforms Law of 1991), and other election laws not inconsistent herewith shall be applied to facilitate Early Voting.

SECTION 9. Appropriations.

The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, the funding shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 10. Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, the COMELEC, in consultation with relevant government agencies and non-government organizations representing the covered sectors, shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary for its effective implementation.

SECTION 11. Separability Clause.

If any provision or part of this Act is declared unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions or parts thereof not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SECTION 12. Repealing Clause.

All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. Effectivity.

This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,