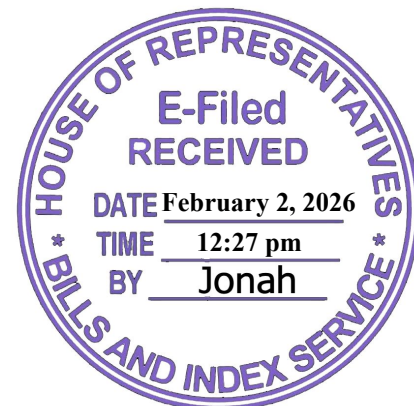




Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 7528



Introduced by Representative LORDAN G. SUAN

AN ACT
STRENGTHENING THE FIELD OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON
ELECTIONS BY UPGRADING AND CREATING CERTAIN
POSITIONS, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE SECTION 53 OF
BATAS PAMBANSA BILANG 881, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE
“OMNIBUS ELECTION CODE,” AS AMENDED AND PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR

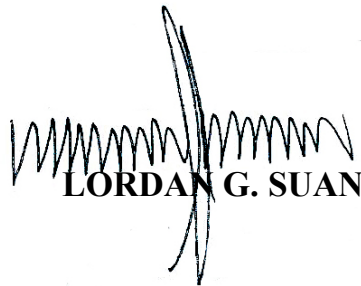
EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is mandated to enforce and administer all laws and regulations relative to the conduct of elections, as well as to exercise exclusive original jurisdiction over all contests relating to elections. This mandate obliges the Commission to ensure that every Filipino is able to exercise their constitutional right of suffrage under Article V of the 1987 Constitution, and that elections are conducted in a manner that is free, fair, orderly, and credible.

Elections play a crucial role in the country's democratic system, as they determine the leaders who will govern the nation, from legislators to executive officials. The outcomes of elections directly affect every citizen and significantly influence national governance, public policy, and the country's standing in international relations. For these reasons, the electoral process must be handled with the utmost integrity, diligence, and dedication.

However, previous elections have been tainted by serious controversies. For instance, the Commission on Elections reported the detection of widespread multiple voter registrations during the period from December 12, 2022, to January 31, 2023. Initially, more than 400,000 individuals were found to have registered multiple times, a figure that later increased to 491,017. In addition, 118,178 individuals were discovered to have registered under dubious circumstances (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 2023). These incidents underscore persistent vulnerabilities in the electoral system that threaten the integrity of elections.

In order for COMELEC to effectively fulfill its constitutional mandate and prevent similar issues in future elections, there is a need to strengthen its field offices. This bill enhances the staffing structure and operational capacity of COMELEC's local offices through the upgrading and creation of key positions, ensuring adequate manpower and clearer lines of authority. These measures will enable the Commission to more efficiently administer election laws, address electoral irregularities, and uphold the integrity of the electoral process.



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

CHAPTER I
GENERAL PROVISIONS

1 **SECTION 1** – Section 53 of Batas Pambansa Bilang 881 is hereby amended to
2 read as follows:

3 “SEC. 53. Field offices of the Commission. – The Commission shall have
4 the following field offices:

5
6 (1) Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election
7 Director **WITH THE RANK OF DIRECTOR IV** and assisted by the
8 Assistant Regional Director **WITH THE RANK OF DIRECTOR III.**
9 **OTHER OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE ARE**
10 **REGIONAL ELECTION ATTORNEY, SENIOR**
11 **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V, ACCOUNTANT III, HUMAN**

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER III, SUPPLY OFFICER III, STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER III, WATCHMAN, PROCESS SERVER, ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV, ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST, UTILITY WORKER AND DRIVER II.

THE POSITIONS AND CORRESPONDING SALARY GRADES IN THE REGIONAL ELECTION OFFICE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR IV	28
DIRECTOR III	27
ATTORNEY V	25
SENIOR ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	22
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
ACCOUNTANT III	19
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT OFFICER III	18
SUPPLY OFFICER III	18
STENOGRAPHIC REPORTER III	11
WATCHMAN	7
PROCESS SERVER	5
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(2) Provincial Election Office, headed by the Provincial Election [Supervisor and assisted by such other subordinate officers or Employees as the Commission may appoint] **DIRECTOR WITH THE RANK OF DIRECTOR II. OTHER OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE ARE COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST, ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V, WATCHMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV, UTILITY WORKER AND DRIVER II.**

THE POSITIONS AND CORRESPONDING SALARY GRADES IN THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION OFFICE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRAD ES
DIRECTOR II	26
COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	21
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	18
WATCHMAN	7

ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(3) [City/Municipal Election Office, headed by the City/Municipal Registrar who shall be assisted by an election clerk and such other employees as the Commission may appoint.] **HIGHLY URBANIZED CITY (HUC) ELECTION OFFICE, HEADED BY THE HUC ELECTION DIRECTOR WITH THE RANK OF DIRECTOR II AND ASSISTED BY A MINIMUM OF TWO (2) ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALISTS. OTHER OFFICERS AND EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE ARE COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V, WATCHMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV, UTILITY WORKER AND DRIVER II. THE POSITIONS AND CORRESPONDING SALARY GRADES IN THE HUC ELECTION OFFICE ARE AS FOLLOWS:**

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
DIRECTOR II	26
COMPUTER MAINTENANCE SPECIALIST	21
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALISTS	21
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER V	18
WATCHMAN	7
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3
DRIVER II	3

(4) **CITY OR MUNICIPAL ELECTION OFFICE, HEADED BY THE CITY OR MUNICIPAL ELECTION OFFICER WITH THE RANK OF DIRECTOR I. THERE SHALL BE A MINIMUM OF TWO (2) ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALISTS IN EVERY CITY OR MUNICIPALITY:**

***PROVIDED,* THAT FOR EVERY ADDITIONAL 20,000 VOTERS IN EXCESS OF 50,000 VOTERS, ADDITIONAL ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALISTS SHALL BE APPOINTED. OTHER EMPLOYEES OF THE OFFICE ARE WATCHMAN, ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV AND UTILITY WORKER.**

THE POSITIONS AND CORRESPONDING SALARY GRADES IN THE CITY OR MUNICIPAL ELECTION OFFICE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

POSITIONS	SALARY GRADES
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DIRECTOR I	24
ASSISTANT ELECTION SPECIALIST	21
WATCHMAN	7
ADMINISTRATIVE AIDE IV	4
UTILITY WORKER	3

“ONLY THE PERSONNEL MENTIONED IN THIS SECTION OR EXPRESSLY AUTHORIZED BY LAW, SHALL BE ASSIGNED, DESIGNATED, ENGAGED OR DETAILED AT THE COMMISSION’S FIELD OFFICES, OR ALLOWED TO PERFORM ADMINISTRATIVE OR CLERICAL WORK IN THE FIELD OFFICES. VIOLATION OF THIS PROVISION SHALL CONSTITUTE AN ELECTION OFFENSE.

The Commission may delegate its powers and functions or order the implementation or enforcement of its orders, rulings or decisions through the heads of its field offices.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ORGANIZATION, STAFFING POSITION CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION STANDARDS AND SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT (DBM) FOR EVALUATION AND APPROVAL.”

SEC. 2. The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for its continued implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 3. Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Chairperson of the Commission on Elections shall, in coordination with the Chairperson of the Civil Service Commission and Secretary of Budget and Management, promulgate the necessary rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 4. If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 5. All laws, executive orders, issuances, decrees, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with or contrary to the provisions of this Act are amended, modified, or repealed accordingly.

SEC. 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,