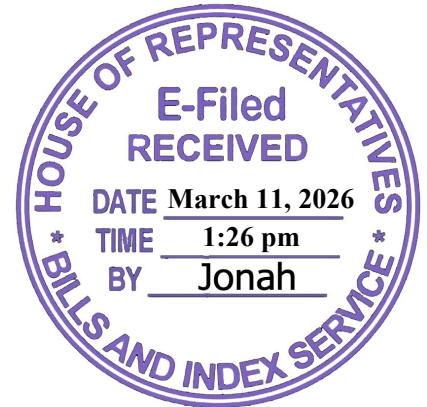




Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives

20th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8431



Introduced by Hon. Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to grant qualified senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), lawyers, and human resources for health (HRH) the option to cast their votes in advance of the regular election day. The measure promotes inclusive suffrage by addressing physical, health, and professional barriers that prevent these vital sectors from fully exercising their constitutional right to vote.

The right to suffrage is fundamental to Philippine democracy, yet certain groups continue to face disproportionate challenges on election day. According to the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), there were over 11.47 million registered senior citizens (aged 60 and above), comprising 16.76% of the total 68.4 million registered voters. There were also 491,417 registered PWD voters. In the May 2025 National and Local Elections, COMELEC implemented nationwide priority polling places (PPP), satellite and accessible polling places, and early voting hours from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. for seniors, PWDs, and pregnant voters. Approximately 4.8 million voters from vulnerable sectors availed of these early hours, contributing to the record 82.2% turnout.

Despite these measures, post-election assessments by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in coordination with COMELEC's Vulnerable Sectors Office revealed persistent gaps: senior citizens and PWDs still experienced long queues in some precincts, difficulty locating names on voter lists, lack of medical aids, inadequate accessible restrooms and ramps, and insufficient shaded waiting areas. These issues compromised the dignity and safety of our elderly and disabled voters and underscore that current accommodations, while helpful, remain insufficient for full and equitable participation.

Lawyers and human resources for health such as but not limited to physicians, nurses, medical technologists, and other allied professionals face equally compelling barriers. Their indispensable roles in upholding the rule of law and safeguarding public health frequently require them to remain on duty or be deployed during elections, effectively disenfranchising many from casting their ballots on election day.

By institutionalizing early voting—through designated days or extended periods prior to election day at fully accessible polling centers—this bill will reduce physical strain on senior citizens and PWDs, minimize overcrowding on election day, and enable lawyers and HRH to fulfill their civic duty without compromising public service.

The enactment of this measure will strengthen democratic participation, promote electoral efficiency, and ensure that no qualified Filipino voter—whether due to age, disability, or essential public service—is left behind.

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


CHARISSE ANNE C. HERNANDEZ
Lone District, Calamba City

Republic of the Philippines HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 8431

Introduced by Honorable Charisse Anne C. Hernandez

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. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to make voting convenient for senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), lawyers, and human resources for health by giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set for the elections.

SEC. 2. *Early Voting.* – In consideration of their respective physical and health conditions, senior citizens and PWDs shall be allowed to vote early in national and local elections. Similarly, in consideration of the necessity of providing professional services and ensuring the health and safety of the populace during election day, lawyers and human resources for health, respectively, shall be allowed to vote early in national and local elections.

For the purposes of this Act, the term “human resources for health” shall refer to those who are engaged in health and health-related work, and all persons employed in all hospitals, sanitarium, health infirmaries, health centers, rural health units, barangay health stations, clinics and other health-related establishments owned and operated by the Government or its political subdivisions with original charters and shall include medical, allied health professional, administrative and support personnel employed regardless of their employment status who physically report to the frontlines during the day of the election.

SEC. 3. *Registration.* – There shall be a nationwide registration for senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health to qualify them to avail of this early voting privilege. Those who are not registered under this Act shall vote on Election Day.

SEC. 4. *Obligations of the Commission on Elections.* – To ensure the effective implementation of this Act, the Commission on Elections shall:

(a) Keep a record of senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health who are registered voters;

(b) Design a registration system, in coordination with local government units, the National Council on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the Office of the Bar Confidant of the Supreme Court, the Integrated Bar of the Philippines, the Department of Health, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government for senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health in order to facilitate their early voting;

(c) Ensure that polling places are safe and accessible to senior citizens and PWDs, and properly fitted with the necessary communication, visual and physical aids, as mandated under Republic Act No. 10366 entitled, “An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens”; and

(d) Mount an intensive information campaign on early voting for qualified senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health.

SEC. 5. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such amount shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 6. *Applicability of Other Laws.* – The provisions of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881 or the Omnibus Election Code, Republic Act No. 7166, entitled, “An Act Providing for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing Appropriations Therefor, and for Other Purposes”, and other election laws not inconsistent herewith shall be applied to facilitate early voting for qualified senior citizens, PWDs, lawyers, and human resources for health.

SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days from its effectivity, the Commission shall promulgate rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If any portion or provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected thereby shall remain in force and effect.

SEC 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All other laws, acts, presidential decrees, executive orders, issuances, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations or parts thereof, which are contrary to and inconsistent with any provision of this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,