



Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila
TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
HOUSE BILL NO. 9297

Introduced by Representative EDGAR R. ERICE

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to vote is among the most sacred rights in a democratic society. However, the exercise of this right becomes meaningless when voters are left to choose candidates based merely on popularity, political machinery, personality politics, entertainment value, or misinformation rather than concrete programs of government and genuine public accountability.

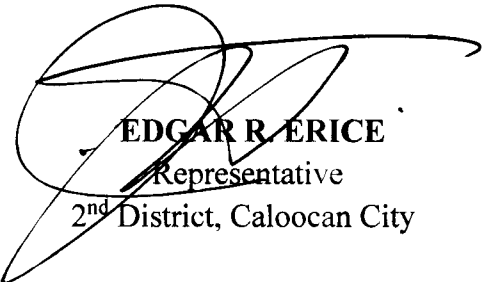
Elections must serve as a venue where candidates present their vision for governance and where the electorate is given the opportunity to intelligently compare the competence, sincerity, and preparedness of aspiring public officials. Unfortunately, many candidates evade public scrutiny by refusing to disclose detailed policy directions or by avoiding public debates altogether. This weakens democratic participation and deprives voters of meaningful information necessary to make informed decisions.

To strengthen electoral accountability and promote issue-based politics, this bill seeks to require candidates for national and local elective positions to submit their campaign platforms or political agendas as an attachment to their Certificates of Candidacy. Such platforms shall contain the candidate's proposed programs, legislative priorities, governance agenda, and policy directions should they be elected into office.

The bill likewise mandates participation in official campaign debates organized and supervised by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). Public debates provide voters the opportunity to directly hear candidates explain their positions, defend their records, and answer questions concerning matters affecting the nation and local communities.

This proposed measure aims to elevate the quality of political discourse, discourage personality-driven campaigns, strengthen transparency and accountability among candidates, and empower the Filipino electorate to vote based on informed judgment.

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



EDGAR R. ERICE
Representative
2nd District, Caloocan City



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AN ACT
REQUIRING THE SUBMISSION OF CAMPAIGN PLATFORMS OR POLITICAL
AGENDAS AS AN ATTACHMENT TO THE CERTIFICATE OF CANDIDACY OF
ELECTIVE OFFICIALS, MANDATING THEIR PARTICIPATION IN OFFICIAL
CAMPAIGN DEBATES ORGANIZED BY THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS,
AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

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

1
2 **SEC. 1. *Short Title.*** This Act shall be known as the “**Responsible and Accountable Election**
3 **Campaign Act.**”

4
5 **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** It is hereby declared the policy of the State to promote honest,
6 orderly, and informed elections by ensuring that candidates for public office present clear
7 programs of government and participate in public discussions concerning issues affecting the
8 electorate.

9 The State recognizes the people’s right to be adequately informed regarding the
10 qualifications, plans, and policy directions of candidates seeking public office and shall
11 encourage issue-based campaigning, transparency, accountability, and meaningful democratic
12 participation..

1
2 **SEC. 3. Coverage.** The provisions of this Act shall apply to all candidates for the following
3 elective positions:

4
5 (a) President;

6
7 (b) Vice-President;

8
9 (c) Senator;

10
11 (d) Member of the House of Representatives;

12
13 (e) Governor;

14
15 (f) Vice-Governor;

16
17 (g) City Mayor;

18
19 (h) City Vice-Mayor;

20
21 (i) Municipal Mayor;

22
23 (j) Municipal Vice-Mayor;

24
25 (k) Sangguniang Panlungsod and Sangguniang Bayan Members; and

26
27 (l) Members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.
28

1 **SEC. 4. *Submission of Campaign Platform or Political Agenda.*** All candidates covered by
2 this Act shall submit, together with their Certificate of Candidacy, a written Campaign Platform
3 or Political Agenda containing the following:

4
5 (a) The candidate's proposed programs, projects, and priorities;

6
7 (b) Legislative or executive agenda;

8
9 (c) Plans for economic, social, educational, health, peace and order, infrastructure,
10 environmental, and governance concerns relevant to the position sought; and

11
12 (d) Other policy directions or commitments intended to guide the candidate's public
13 service should he or she be elected.

14
15 The Commission on Elections shall prescribe the standard format, minimum contents,
16 and submission requirements for the Campaign Platform or Political Agenda.

17
18 **SEC. 5. *Publication and Accessibility.*** The Commission on Elections shall ensure that all
19 submitted Campaign Platforms or Political Agendas are made publicly accessible through its
20 official website and other appropriate information platforms within fifteen (15) days from the
21 filing of Certificates of Candidacy.

22
23 The COMELEC may likewise coordinate with government agencies, educational
24 institutions, media organizations, and civil society groups for the dissemination of such
25 platforms to the general public.

26
27 **SEC 6. *Mandatory Participation in Official Campaign Debates.*** All candidates covered by
28 this Act shall be required to participate in official campaign debates organized, supervised, and
29 sanctioned by the Commission on Elections.

30
31 The COMELEC shall ensure impartiality, equal opportunity, reasonable speaking
32 time, and fair moderation during all debates.

1 **SEC. 7. *Schedule of Mandatory Debates.*** The mandatory debates shall be conducted according
2 to the following schedule:

3 **a. For President** - three (3) mandatory debates:

4 (1) First week of the campaign period;

5 (2) Fourth week of the campaign period; and

6 (3) Eighth week of the campaign period.

7
8 **b. For Vice-President** - two (2) mandatory debates:

9
10 (1) During the first month of the campaign period; and

11
12 (2) During the second month of the campaign period.

13
14 **c. For Senators** - two (2) mandatory debates:

15
16 (1) During the first month of the campaign period; and

17
18 (2) During the second month of the campaign period.

19
20 **d. For Members of the House of Representatives** - one (1) mandatory debate during
21 the third week of the campaign period.

22
23 **e. For Governor** - two (2) mandatory debates:

24
25 (1) During the first week of the campaign period; and

26
27 (2) During the fourth week of the campaign period.

28
29 **f. For Vice-Governor** - one (1) mandatory debate during the first week of the
30 campaign period.

1
2 **g. For City Mayor** - two (2) mandatory debates:

3
4 (1) During the first week of the campaign period; and

5
6 (2) During the fourth week of the campaign period.

7
8 **h. For City Vice-Mayor** - one (1) mandatory debate during the first week of the
9 campaign period.

10
11 **i. For Municipal Mayor** - one (1) mandatory debate during the second week of the
12 campaign period.

13
14 **j. For Municipal Vice-Mayor** - one (1) mandatory debate during the second week of
15 the campaign period.

16
17 **k. For Sangguniang Panlungsod, Sangguniang Bayan, and Sangguniang**
18 **Panlalawigan Members** - mandatory public presentation of campaign platforms or
19 political agendas during the third week of the campaign period, in a forum organized
20 or recognized by the COMELEC.

21
22 **SEC. 8. *Grounds for Excused Non-Participation.*** A candidate may be excused from
23 participating in a mandatory debate only on grounds of:

24
25 (a) Serious illness or medical emergency duly certified by a government physician;

26
27 (b) Force majeure or circumstances beyond the candidate's control; or

28
29 The COMELEC may require documentary proof to support the request for exemption.
30

1 **SEC. 9. *Penalties.*** Failure to submit a Campaign Platform or Political Agenda without valid
2 cause shall constitute a ground for the denial or cancellation of the Certificate of Candidacy
3 after due notice and hearing.

4
5 Unjustified refusal or failure to participate in mandatory campaign debates or public
6 presentations shall constitute an election offense punishable under applicable election laws and
7 shall further subject the candidate to administrative fines to be determined by the COMELEC.

8
9 The COMELEC may also require public disclosure of the candidate's refusal or failure
10 to participate.

11
12 **SEC. 10. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** Within ninety (90) days from the effectivity
13 of this Act, the Commission on Elections shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations
14 for the effective implementation of this Act.

15
16 **SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.*** If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional or
17 invalid, the remaining provisions not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

18
19 **SEC. 12. *Repealing Clause.*** All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules, and regulations
20 inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified
21 accordingly.

22
23 **SEC. 13. *Effectivity.*** This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the
24 Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

25
26 Approved,