

**NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**
First Regular Session

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SENATE
S.B. No. 1501

RECEIVED BY:

Introduced by SENATOR RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR.

**AN ACT
AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS "AN ACT
AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO DESIGNATE
PRECINCTS ASSIGNED TO ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES EXCLUSIVELY
FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS"**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Republic Act no. 10366 was enacted last February 2013 for the establishment of precincts for the exclusive use of persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Emergency Accessible Polling Places (EAPPs) are established nationwide for the use in election days.

This proposed legislation seeks to strengthen the law by addressing the concerns experienced during the previous implementations. This bill requires that APPs shall be readily accessible to public transportation and shall be free of any barriers and provided with necessary infrastructure and assistive devices. Furthermore, while RA 10366 authorizes the COMELEC to establish precincts for PWDs and senior citizens, this proposed measure gives flexibility to the Commission in designating APPs by allowing the use of various venues, such as public schools, town halls or plazas, civic centers, community centers or other similarly designated special venues or areas, for the purpose. This will help in ensuring both the PWDs' and senior citizens' safety and comfort. In addition, this bill seeks to provide for early voting for PWDs and Senior Citizens.

Senior citizens and PWDs are among the vulnerable sectors of our society, but they comprise a significant 8 million of the total registered voters in the country. It is the State's responsibility to ensure that they participate in the electoral process.

In this light, consideration of this proposal is earnestly sought.


RAMON BONG REVILLA, JR. *jr*

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

1 SECTION 1. Section 2(j) of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read
2 as follows:

3 "SECTION. 2. x x x

4 "x x x

5 "(j) *Accessible polling place* refers to the venue where the Board
6 of Election Inspectors (BEIs) conducts election-related proceedings
7 and where the voters cast their votes. The accessible polling place
8 shall be located at the ground floor, preferably near the entrance of
9 the building, **SHALL BE READILY ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC**
10 **TRANSPORTATION**, and [is] **SHALL BE** free of any physical barriers
11 and provided with necessary **INFRASTRUCTURE AND** services,
12 including assistive devices[-], **RAMPS, RAILINGS, SIDEWALKS,**
13 **ADEQUATE LIGHTING, VENTILATION AND OTHER FEATURES**
14 **FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND SENIOR CITIZENS."**

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Sec. 2. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read as follows:

*"SEC. 9. [Creation of] Precincts for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens. – The Commission is hereby authorized to [establish] **DESIGNATE** precincts [of a nonterritorial nature, exclusively for] **IN ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF** persons with disabilities and senior citizens, [who in their registration records manifest their intent to avail of their right to a separate precinct under this section. Pursuant hereto, the Commission shall establish at least one (1) such precinct, assigned to accessible polling places, for every voting center.] **SUCH AS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, TOWN HALLS, OR PLAZAS, CIVIC CENTERS, COMMUNITY CNTERS OR OTHER SIMILARLY DESIGNATED SPECIAL VENUES OR AREAS, AND PREFERABLY THOSE DESIGNED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES, TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY AND COMFORT.** Such precincts shall be provided with assistive devices **PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 2(J) OF THIS ACT** as well as the services of experts in assisting persons with disabilities."*

Sec. 3. A new Section 11 is inserted to read as follows:

"SEC. 11. EARLY VOTING. – FOR NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS, THERE SHALL BE EARLY VOTING WHERE SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES QUALIFIED TO VOTE EARLY MAY CHOOSE TO CAST THEIR BALLOT FOR A PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN TWO (2) DAYS WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) CALENDAR DAYS BEFORE ELECTION DAY AT ACCESSIBLE ESTABLISHMENTS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS.

1 **THERE SHALL BE A NATIONWIDE REGISTRATION OF SENIOR**
2 **CITIZENS AND PWDs WHO MAY WISH TO AVAIL OF THEIR**
3 **EARLY VOTING PRIVILEGES TO QUALIFY THEM FOR EARLY**
4 **VOTING. THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED UNDER THE**
5 **EARLY VOTING SYSTEM SHALL VOTE ON ELECTION DAY.**

6
7 Renumber the succeeding Sections accordingly.

8
9 Sec. 4. Within sixty (60) days from its effectivity, the Commission shall
10 promulgate the rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

11
12 Sec. 5. *Separability Clause.* If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or
13 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall
14 remain valid and subsisting.

15
16 Sec. 6. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, presidential decrees or issuances,
17 executive orders, letter of instructions, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary
18 to, or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified or
19 amended accordingly.

20
21 Sec. 7. *Effectivity Clause.* This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
22 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved.