

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Second Regular Session* )

23 JUL 26 A9:31

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**SENATE**  
S. No. 2361

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Introduced by Senator MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR A SYSTEM OF EARLIER VOTING FOR QUALIFIED SENIOR**  
**CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF THE PHILIPPINES,**  
**APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The right to vote is a fundamental pillar of any democratic society. It is essential that every eligible citizen has the opportunity to participate in the electoral process and have their voices heard. In our country, senior citizens and PWD comprise a significant portion of the population and deserve special attention to guarantee the realization of their voting rights.

Senior citizens and PWD experience physical limitations or health conditions that can make it difficult for them to participate in the voting process alongside the general population on the designated election day. These challenges may include mobility issues, visual impairments, or other conditions that require additional attention or accommodations.

By providing an opportunity for senior citizens and PWD to vote on a separate day prior to the national election, we can ensure that these individuals are given the necessary time and support to exercise their voting rights. This approach will enable election officials to focus specifically on their needs, offering a more accessible and inclusive voting experience for this vulnerable demographic.

Moreover, allowing early voting for senior citizens and PWD is not only safe but also practical. Separate voting days will alleviate overcrowding at polling stations on the national election day, reducing the potential for long queues and wait times. This arrangement will also help mitigate the risk of exposure to contagious diseases, as senior citizens and PWD would be able to vote in a less crowded environment, where health and safety measures can be implemented more effectively.

It is crucial to emphasize that the proposed early voting for voters in need of assistance does not intend to undermine the integrity or legitimacy of the electoral process. On the contrary, it seeks to enhance the democratic process by ensuring the full participation of all citizens, regardless of their age or physical abilities. By accommodating their particular needs, we demonstrate our commitment to promoting inclusivity, accessibility, and equality within our electoral system.

The proposed measure seeks to fulfill the aforementioned Constitutional mandate by allowing senior citizens and PWD to avoid the cumbersome and rigorous electoral process in the regular election day by allowing them to vote seven (7) days before the scheduled election day.

In view of the foregoing, early passage of this bill is earnestly requested.

  
**MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID**  
*Senator*

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

5 SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State  
6 to make voting convenient for senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) by  
7 giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set for the election.

8 SEC. 2. *Early Voting.* – For national and local elections, there shall be early  
9 voting where qualified senior citizens and PWDs may choose to cast their ballot at  
10 accessible establishments designated by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)  
11 within seven (7) working days before the date set for the elections.

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

15 SEC. 4. *Obligations of the COMELEC.* – To ensure the effective implementation  
16 of this Act, the COMELEC shall:

- 17 1. Keep a record of senior citizens and PWDs who are registered voters;

- 1           2. Design a registration system, in coordination with local government  
2           units, the National Commission for Senior Citizens, the National Council  
3           on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the Department  
4           of Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government, that  
5           allows senior citizens and PWDs to register and opt for early voting;
- 6           3. Ensure that polling places are safe and accessible to senior citizens and  
7           PWDs, and properly fitted with the necessary communication, visual and  
8           physical aids, as mandated under Republic Act No. 10366 entitled, An  
9           Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts  
10          Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with  
11          Disabilities and Senior Citizens"; and
- 12          4. Mount an intensive information campaign on early voting for qualified  
13          senior citizens and PWDs.

14           SEC 5. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount for the implementation of this Act  
15          shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the COMELEC.  
16          Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General  
17          Appropriations Act.

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

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

27           SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – If, for any reason, any section or provision of this  
28          Act, or any portion thereof, or the application of such section, provision, or portion, is  
29          declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or the application of  
30          such section, provision, or portion thereof shall not be affected by such declaration.

1           SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, letters of instructions, resolutions,  
2 orders, rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the  
3 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified accordingly, or amended  
4 accordingly.

5           SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from  
6 its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) national newspapers of  
7 general circulation.

8           *Approved,*