

Republic of the Philippines
Congress of the Philippines
Senate

Manila City

Eighteenth Congress

Third Regular Session



RESOLUTION NO. 122

RESOLUTION URGING THE COMMISSION ON
ELECTIONS TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE FOR
VOTER REGISTRATION FROM SEPTEMBER 30,
2021 TO OCTOBER 31, 2021 TO PREVENT VOTER
DISENFRANCHISEMENT BROUGHT ABOUT BY
THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is constitutionally-mandated to “[e]nforce and administer all laws and regulations relative to the conduct of an election, plebiscite, initiative, referendum, and recall” and has the power to determine periods to accomplish pre-election activities, such as voter registration;

WHEREAS, registration is part and parcel of the right to vote and an indispensable element in the election process;

WHEREAS, under Section 8 of Republic Act No. 8189 or the Voter's Registration Act of 1996, COMELEC shall establish a system of continuing registration of voters. However, no registration shall be conducted during the period starting one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election and ninety (90) days before a special election;

WHEREAS, COMELEC promulgated COMELEC Resolution No. 10549 on July 18, 2019 and COMELEC Resolution No. 10635 on January 10, 2020, setting voter registration for the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections (NLE) from January 20, 2020 until September 30, 2021;

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, COMELEC suspended voter registration starting March 10, 2020 due to the COVID-19. After a series of extensions, voter registration was suspended until August 31, 2020 or more than five and a half months;

WHEREAS, on August 12, 2020, COMELEC promulgated COMELEC Resolution No. 10674 which set the protocols on conducting voter registration under the new normal. Under COMELEC Resolution No. 10674, voter registration in areas under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) shall be suspended for the duration of the ECQ or MECQ status;

WHEREAS, in late March 2021, voter registration in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite (NCR Plus), was suspended due to the imposition of ECQ and/or MECQ. Voter registration in NCR Plus resumed after nearly two months on May 17, 2021, when quarantine restrictions relaxed to general community quarantine on May 15, 2021;

WHEREAS, in early August 2021, COMELEC again suspended voter registration in ECQ and MECQ areas, including Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal, Laguna, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Lucena, among others, for at least two weeks;

WHEREAS, in a hearing of the Senate Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation on February 18, 2021, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) mentioned that the projected voting population for the 2022 NLE is at 73.3 million. As of June 2021, the COMELEC said that there are around 60 million registered voters, leaving around 13.3 million unregistered potential voters;

WHEREAS, while it is also important for COMELEC to have enough time to prepare the final list of voters, which is a prerequisite for the preparation and completion of the Project of Precincts (POP), a one-month extension will not unduly hamper or delay COMELEC's preparation of the POP. In fact, in previous national and local elections, COMELEC set deadlines that are on or beyond October 31 of the year before elections, namely:

National and Local Elections	Voter Registration Deadline
2001	December 27, 2000
2004	October 31, 2003
2007	December 31, 2006
2010	January 9, 2010
2013	October 31, 2012
2016	October 31, 2015

WHEREAS, in *Kabataan Party-list v. Commission on Elections* (G.R. No. 221318, December 16, 2015), the Supreme Court recognized COMELEC's power to set the deadline of voter registration, provided no registration may be done during the period starting one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election. The Court also recognized COMELEC's prerogative in setting the deadline for registration, taking into consideration administrative necessities and other exigencies in setting such date;

WHEREAS, considering the five-and-a-half-month suspension (approximately 28.3% of the entire registration period) of voter registration across the country and, after that, month-long suspensions in areas under ECQ and