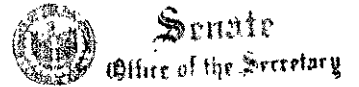


SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )



74 NOV 18 P1:47

SENATE  
S. No. **2459**

RECEIVED BY: *J.*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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AN ACT  
TO IMPROVE VOTER TURNOUT BY PROVIDING PRE-REGISTRATION  
SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN AGED SIXTEEN AND  
SEVENTEEN

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 13 provides:

Section 13. The State recognizes the vital role of the youth in nation-building and shall promote and protect their physical, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social well-being. It shall inculcate in the youth patriotism and nationalism, and encourage their involvement in public and civic affairs.

Article 5, Section 1 also provides:

Section 1. Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law, who are at least eighteen years of age, and who shall have resided in the Philippines for at least one year, and in the place wherein they propose to vote, for at least six months immediately preceding the election. No literacy, property, or other substantive requirement shall be imposed on the exercise of suffrage.

The Philippines has seen a steady decline in voter turnout in the National elections as shown by the data of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA).<sup>1</sup> This may indicate lower participation and civic-mindedness among Filipinos in general. Studies show, however, that voting behavior becomes less susceptible to change in older generations. Corollarily, studies also show that factors that may affect voting behaviour, such as institutional reform and political events, have the greatest impact on young voters, especially in the first three times that they vote. These

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.idea.int/vt/countryview.cfm?CountryCode=PH>

impacts have a long term effect on their voting behavior as they age.<sup>2</sup>All these factors suggest that targeting the youth and encouraging them to vote by fostering awareness and convenience may be the best way to improve overall voter turnout, and by extension, the sense of civic involvement, duty and responsibility among the citizenry.

One reform that can potentially increase voter turnout and encourage the youth to exercise their right to suffrage, is voter pre-registration. This allows children aged 1 to 2 years below voting age to register in advance. This makes registration and voting more convenient, and has resulted in greater voting awareness and voter turnout among the youth in other countries, particularly in the United States, once they have reached voting age.<sup>3</sup>

Our Constitution provides that suffrage may be exercised by citizens who are at least eighteen years of age. However, the government and our current educational system fall short in preparing and guiding the youth on exercising their right to suffrage. This situation leads to low awareness of the voting process, low preparedness, and ultimately, low voter turnout for first-time young voters.

This bill seeks to foster and improve voter turnout, civic involvement and electoral awareness, and responsible voting among the youth by providing them with pre-registration services in their own schools. Not only will this make it more convenient for the youth to participate in the electoral process, but this will also increase awareness and promote civic duty at an early age. As a result, it is more likely that young people will vote when they reach eighteen years old. This bill also aims to instill in young people a habit of participating in the electoral process.

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO  
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<sup>2</sup>Franklin, M. (n.d.). Voter Turnout and the Dynamics of Electoral Competition in Established Democracies since 1945.

<sup>3</sup>McDonald, M., & Thornburg, M. (n.d.). Registering the Youth Through Voter Preregistration. *New York University Journal of Legislation and Public Policy*, 13, 551-572.

SIXTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Second Regular Session )



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SENATE  
S. No. 2459

RECEIVED BY: *Ju*

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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

1 AN ACT  
2 TO IMPROVE VOTERS TURNOUT BY PROVIDING PRE-REGISTRATION  
3 SERVICES IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS FOR CHILDREN AGED 16 AND 17  
4

5 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Youth Pre-registration  
6 Act”.

7 SECTION 2. *Designation of Lead Agencies.*– The Commission on Elections  
8 (COMELEC) shall be primarily responsible for the proper implementation of this Act.  
9 This shall be carried out in cooperation with the Department of Education (DepEd) and  
10 its subdivisions. The COMELEC and the DepEd shall be jointly responsible for providing  
11 the implementing rules and regulations that shall govern the conduct of the activities  
12 outlined in this Act.

13 SECTION 3. *Declaration of Policy.* – A person who is sixteen or seventeen years  
14 of age may register to vote in the manner prescribed in this Act. However, no one under  
15 eighteen years of age shall be permitted to vote in any election in accordance with the  
16 Constitution, Article 5, Section 1.

17 SECTION 4. *Pre-registration in Public Schools.* – The COMELEC, in  
18 coordination with the DepEd, shall conduct a school activity in all public schools  
19 nationwide, for the purpose of providing enrolled students aged sixteen and seventeen  
20 with the opportunity to register for voting. The DepEd shall provide preliminary  
21 preparations for the activity including informing the students beforehand of all the

1 necessary requirements for voter registration. This activity shall be conducted once every  
2 year in each public school.

3 SECTION 5. *Pre-registration in Private Schools.* – Private Schools are  
4 encouraged to conduct similar activities. The COMELEC shall, at the request of any  
5 private school, provide the same pre-registration services.

6 SECTION 6. *Authorization of Appropriations.* – There are authorized to be  
7 appropriated to carry out this Act such sums as may be necessary for the implementation  
8 of this Act.

9 SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid  
10 or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall  
11 remain valid and subsisting.

12 SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance,  
13 executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to  
14 or is inconsistent with the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended  
15 accordingly.

16 SECTION 9. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after  
17 its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

/aml13nov2014