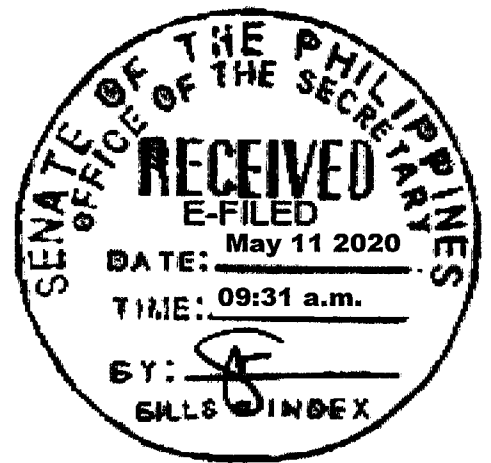


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)



SENATE
S. B. NO. 1516

Introduced by SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

**AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO USE
AND IMPLEMENT AN AUTOMATED AND ONLINE SYSTEM FOR
VOTER REGISTRATION, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR
OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Suffrage, or the right to vote, is the hallmark of a vibrant democracy. It is through which that the people, in their sovereign capacity and will, vest upon their chosen few the power, duty, and privilege to serve and govern. The right of suffrage, however, is a franchise subject to State regulation. While it lies in the heart of a truly democratic State, its exercise is conditioned on the fulfilment of a procedural limitation—that of registration. The seeming lengthy and tedious processes involved in voter registration however may prove to be a deterrent for many from registering as voters or updating their registration records. As we herald the Fourth Industrial Revolution, technological advancements and innovations present an abundant opportunity for the State to address this issue by lending more efficiency, economy, and accessibility to voter registration processes.

This bill seeks to take advantage of these technological advances by mandating the Commission on Elections, as far as practicable, to adopt, design and use an automated and online system for voter registration that enables the electronic and online filing and processing of the application for voter registration, transfer of registration, reactivation, correction of voter registration entries and such other requests and processes relative to the voter's registration and records.

Indeed, a more convenient, efficient, and accessible registration process encourages more people to register. This further increases the possibility of higher voter participation in the elections because there is nothing healthier for a democratic

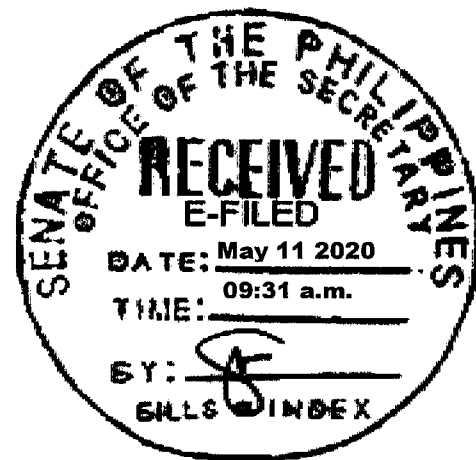
state than to have citizens who are informed, actively participating in its democratic processes, and truly engaged in charting the course of its destiny.

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



SENATOR JOEL VILLANUEVA

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

- 1 **SECTION 1. Short Title.** – This Act shall be known as the “Online Voter Registration
2 Act.”
3
- 4 **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.** – It is the policy of the State to establish a system of
5 registration that ensures and guarantees a clean, complete, permanent, and updated
6 list of voters. To encourage and ensure a continuing system of voter registration, the
7 State shall adopt and make use of technologies that shall facilitate and allow the
8 automated and online registration of voters, taking into account the integrity,
9 completeness, and accuracy of the list of voters.
10
- 11 **SEC. 3. Automated and Online Voter Registration System.** – The Commission on
12 Elections (COMELEC) shall, as far as practicable, adopt, design, and use an
13 automated and online system for voter registration that enables the electronic and
14 online filing and processing of the application for voter registration, transfer of
15 registration, reactivation, correction of voter registration entries, and such other
16 requests and processes relative to the voter’s registration and records.
17
- 18 The COMELEC shall also endeavor to use the same automated and online system
19 for the verification and approval of application for voter registration, transfer of
20 registration, reactivation, correction of voter registration entries, and such other
21 requests and processes relative to the voter’s registration and records as may be
22 practicable, bearing in mind the State’s policy of ensuring the integrity and accuracy
23 of the voters list and records.
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SEC. 4. Automated and Online Verification. – Where online verification of the application or request is not feasible in the meantime, the system shall nonetheless allow the applicant to submit his or her application or request through the COMELEC’s online platform. The same application and the information contained therein, including the demographics of the applicant, shall be processed electronically and shall be automatically stored in the COMELEC database for pending voter registration application or requests.

The system shall promptly provide the applicant with complete and detailed information as to the steps required to complete the application or request.

SEC. 5. Personal Filing. – The automated and online filing of application for voter registration shall not preclude the personal filing of applications for registration, transfer of registration, reactivation, correction of voter registration entries, and such other requests, which shall continue to be available and conducted in the office of the Election Officer during office hours.

SEC. 6. Automated and Electronic Notice of Approval or Disapproval. – The automated and electronic system of voter registration shall include a feature that automatically informs the applicant of the successful submission of his or her application or request. The system shall provide detailed instructions on how the applicant may follow up or complete the application for registration or requests, the estimated time to complete the processing of the application or request, details on the notice of approval or disapproval of the application and requests, further remedies available in case of disapproval, and such other information necessary to promptly assist the applicant with his or her application or request.

SEC. 7. Secure Internet Website and Online Platforms. – The COMELEC shall design, devise, adopt, or otherwise use a secure Internet Website or online platform where such applications may be filed by voters and/or applicants. Security measures shall be put in place to protect and guarantee the completeness, accuracy, and integrity of voter registration forms, applications, and information submitted and filed through such Internet Website or online platform.

SEC. 8. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The COMELEC, in coordination with the appropriate government agencies, including the Department of Science and Technology (“DOST”) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (“DICT”), and in consultation with relevant stakeholders, shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

SEC. 9. Appropriation. – The amount necessary for the effective implementation of this Act shall be included in the budget of the COMELEC in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 10. Separability Clause. – Any portion or provisions of this Act that may be declared unconstitutional or invalid shall not have the effect of nullifying other portions or provisions hereof as long as such remaining portions or provisions can still subsist and be given effect in their entirety.

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SEC. 11. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, memoranda, circulars, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which are inconsistent with this Act, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 12. Effectivity Clause. – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,