

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

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SENATE S.B. No. <u>1501</u>)

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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

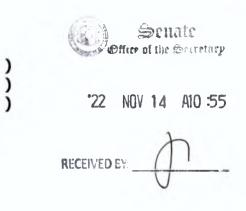
Republic Act no. 10366 was enacted last February 2013 for the establishment of precincts for the exclusive use of persons with disabilities and senior citizens. Emergency Accessible Polling Places (EAPPs) are established nationwide for the use in election days.

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.



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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 INFRASTRACTURE 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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2 Sec. 2. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to read as 3 follows:

"SEC. 9. [Creation of] Precincts for Persons with Disabilities and 4 5 Senior Citizens. – The Commission is hereby authorized to [establish] 6 **DESIGNATE** precincts [of a nonterritorial nature, exclusively for] IN 7 ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF 8 persons with disabilities and senior citizens, [who-in their registration 9 records manifest their intent to avail of their right to a separate precinct under this section. Pursuant hereto, the Commission shall 10 establish at least one (1) such precinct, assigned to accessible polling 11 places, for every voting center.] SUCH AS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 12 TOWN HALLS, OR PLAZAS, CIVIC CENTERS, COMMUNITY 13 CNTERS OR OTHER SIMILARLY DESIGNATED SPECIAL 14 VENUES OR AREAS, AND PREFERABLY THOSE DESIGNED 15 WITH SPECIAL FEATURES, TO ENSURE THEIR SAFETY AND 16 **COMFORT.** Such precincts shall be provided with assistive devices 17 PURSUANT TO THE PROVISIONS OF SECTION 2(J) OF THIS 18 19 **ACT** as well as the services of experts in assisting persons with disabilities." 20

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

"SEC. 11. EARLY VOTING. - FOR NATIONAL AND LOCAL 24 25 ELECTIONS, THERE SHALL BE EARLY VOTING WHERE SENIOR CITIZENS AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES QUALIFIED TO 26 VOTE EARLY MAY CHOOSE TO CAST THEIR BALLOT FOR A 27 PERIOD OF NOT LESS THAN TWO (2) DAYS WITHIN FIFTEEN (15) 28 CALENDAR DAYS BEFORE ELECTION DAY AT ACCESSIBLE 29 ESTABLISHMENTS DESIGNATED BY THE COMMISSION ON 30 31 ELECTIONS.

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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 VOTING. THOSE WHO ARE NOT REGISTERED UNDER THE 4 EARLY VOTING SYSTEM SHALL VOTE ON ELECTION DAY. 5 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 Sec. 5. Separability Clause. If any provision or part hereof, is held invalid or 12 13 unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall 14 remain valid and subsisting. 15 Sec. 6. Repealing Clause. - All laws, presidential decrees or issuances, 16 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.

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