

FIFTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE REPUBLIC )  
OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
Third Regular Session )

1917

SENATE

S.B. No. 3392

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Introduced By Senator Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Our democracy requires broad participation in electoral exercises and the exercise of the right of suffrage by persons who have all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications to vote.

Voters are required to be physically present in the polling place where they are registered in order that they may exercise their right to vote. This rule is subject to several exceptions, such as members of the Armed Forces of the Philippines and members of the Philippine National Police who are duly registered voters and temporarily assigned to perform public functions on election day in places where they are not registered. There is also pending legislation to grant an exemption to members of the media who are assigned to perform their functions on election day in places where they are not registered.

This bill seeks to extend the exception to members of the staff of national electoral candidates and registered national political parties who are called to be outside their place of registration on election day given the wide-spread area covered by the national election. This bill seeks to grant such persons the opportunity to exercise their right of suffrage, under certain conditions.

The passage of this bill is also in the national interest considering that it will ensure a higher voter turnout and promote greater involvement of the citizenry in the electoral process.

  
MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID  
Senator 

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**AN ACT PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING FOR QUALIFIED MEMBERS OF  
THE STAFF OF ELECTORAL CANDIDATES AND REGISTERED NATIONAL  
POLITICAL PARTIES**

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

1       **SECTION 1. Title.**—This Act shall be known as the "Early Voting for  
2 Electoral Staff Act of 2013".

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4       **SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.**—It is a policy of the State to ensure the free  
5 exercise of the right of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines who are not  
6 otherwise disqualified by law.

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8       **SEC. 3. Coverage.**—Electoral staff of national electoral candidates and  
9 registered national political parties who are registered voters but, by reason of their  
10 functions and duties as electoral staff, are assigned on election day to a place other  
11 than their place of registration may avail of the voting procedure provided under  
12 this Act.

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14       "Electoral staff" are employees or volunteers assisting a candidate or a  
15 registered national political party in the conduct, monitoring and safeguarding of

1 election-related activities. For purposes of this Act, in no case shall the number of a  
2 national candidate's or registered national political party's electoral staff exceed the  
3 total number of cities and municipalities in the Philippines, as reflected by the  
4 Commission on Elections' ("COMELEC") progress reports.

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6 **SEC. 4. *Request for Application Form.***—Not later than thirty (30) days before  
7 the election, a national electoral candidate or a registered national political party  
8 whose electoral staff are covered by this Act shall submit to the COMELEC a list of  
9 the names, designation, place of registration, and place of assignment of such  
10 electoral staff. Such list shall be accompanied with a request that such registered  
11 voters be provided with an application form to cast absentee ballots in accordance  
12 with this Act and the rules and regulations to be promulgated by the COMELEC in  
13 accordance hereto. The list and the request shall both be accomplished under oath.

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15 **SEC. 5. *COMELEC Verification of Request.***—Upon verification by the  
16 COMELEC that the persons included in the list are qualified voters, it shall transmit  
17 the exact number of application forms to the candidate making the request.

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19 **SEC. 6. *Application for Absentee Voting.***—The registered voters concerned  
20 shall personally accomplish the application for absentee voting and shall promptly  
21 submit the same to the COMELEC within the period provided for submission. Upon  
22 verification of the applications, the COMELEC shall transmit the exact number of  
23 absentee ballots to the appropriate Office of the City or Municipal Election Registrar.

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25 **SEC. 7. *Voting.***—The absentee voters shall vote not later than one week before  
26 election day. They shall do so by casting their votes in the office of the City or  
27 Municipal Election Registrar of the place of their registration.

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29 **SEC. 8. *Sanctity and Secrecy of Absentee Ballots.***—The COMELEC shall  
30 promulgate rules and provide a mechanism ensuring the sanctity and secrecy of the  
31 special absentee ballots to be accomplished in accordance with this Act.

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**SEC. 9. *Transmission of the Absentee Ballots.***—The COMELEC official to whom the special absentee ballot is delivered shall immediately transmit the same to the COMELEC, by the fastest means available, so that all special absentee ballots are in the custody of the COMELEC Central Office before the closing of the polls on election day.

The transmittal letter shall indicate the names of the persons who cast the absentee votes, their voter’s registration record number and their certificates of eligibility to vote as absentee voters.

**SEC. 10. *Canvass of Absentee Votes.***—The COMELEC shall canvass the votes cast in accordance with this Act and shall add the results of said canvass to the votes reported throughout the country.

**SEC. 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.***—The COMELEC shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to implement this Act.

**SEC. 12. *Appropriations.***—The amount necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act shall be provided in a supplemental budget or included in the General Appropriations Act of the year of its enactment into law. Thereafter, the expenses for its continued implementation shall be included in the subsequent General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 13. *Separability Clause.***—If any provision or part of this Act shall be declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

**SEC. 14. *Repealing Clause.***—All laws, decrees, executive orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,