

NINETEENTH CONGRESS OF THE )  
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES )  
*Second Regular Session* )



23 NOV -8 P 6 :48

**SENATE**  
**S. B. No. 2482**

RECEIVED BY

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Introduced by Senator Joseph Victor G. Ejercito

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**AN ACT**  
**PROVIDING FOR A SYSTEM OF EARLIER VOTING FOR QUALIFIED SENIOR**  
**CITIZENS, PREGNANT WOMEN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES OF THE**  
**PHILIPPINES, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER**  
**PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to suffrage is a constitutionally protected right that shall be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines, and the Congress shall provide a system and design a procedure for the vulnerable sector to be able to vote. These vulnerable sectors include senior citizens, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities, and they are given special considerations during the electoral process to ensure their ease of participation.

According to the Philippines Statistics Authority, there are 15,078,121 Filipinos aged 60 years old and above as of May 2020. COMELEC Vulnerable Sectors Office's (VSO) data tallied around 512,000 registered persons with disabilities in 2022.<sup>1</sup> However, they still encounter difficulties due to mobility problems and this results to most of them giving up their exercise to vote altogether. The voter turnout for May 2022 elections as of January 2023 for persons with disability is only 296,240, and 6,912,984 for senior citizens. Relatively, in a survey conducted by Upholding Life and Nature (ULAN), a nongovernmental organization, showed that 1,326 voting centers across the country documented experiences of PWDs and senior citizens reassigned

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<sup>1</sup> PIDS: Accessible voting precincts for PWDs a good start, but more inclusive coverage still needed - <https://www.pids.gov.ph/details/news/in-the-news/accessible-voting-precincts-for-pwds-a-good-start-but-more-inclusive-coverage-still-needed>

to upper floors, long queues, and non-consideration of their unique needs and situations.

This bill seeks to provide a system that will allow early voting for qualified senior citizens, pregnant women, and persons with disabilities to cast their ballot in accessible establishments designated by the COMELEC within seven working days before the election date. Further, they will be provided a nationwide registration to qualify them to avail of the early voting privilege. Through early voting, we aim to improve political representation by addressing the special needs of our vulnerable sector.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO', with a stylized flourish at the end.

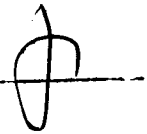
**JOSEPH VICTOR G. EJERCITO**

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

1           Section. 1. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is hereby declared the policy of the State  
2 to make voting convenient for senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) by  
3 giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set for the election.

4           Sec. 2. *Early Voting.* - For national and local elections, there shall be early  
5 voting where qualified senior citizens and PWDs may choose to cast their ballot at  
6 accessible establishments designated by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC)  
7 within seven (7) working days before the date set for the elections.

8           Sec. 3. *Registration.* - There shall be a nationwide registration for senior citizens  
9 and PWDs to qualify them to avail of this early voting privilege. Those who are not  
10 registered under this Act shall vote on Election Day.

11           Sec. 4. *Obligations of the COMELEC.* - To ensure the effective implementation  
12 of this Act, the COMELEC shall:

- 13           a) Keep a record of senior citizens and PWDs who are registered voters;
- 14           b) Design a registration system, in coordination with local government units, the  
15 National Council on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the  
16 Department of Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government,  
17 that allows senior citizens and PWDs to register and opt for early voting;

1 c) Ensure that polling places are safe and accessible to senior citizens and PWDs,  
2 and properly fitted with the necessary communication, visual and physical aids,  
3 as mandated under Republic Act No. 10366 entitled. An Act Authorizing the  
4 Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling  
5 Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens"; and shall  
6 be charged against the current year's appropriations of the COMELEC.  
7 Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General  
8 Appropriations.

9 d) Mount an intensive information campaign on early voting for qualified senior  
10 citizens and PWDs.

11 *Sec. 5. Appropriations.* – The initial amount for the implementation of this Act  
12 shall be charged against the current year's appropriations of the COMELEC.  
13 Thereafter, the funding of which shall be included in the Annual General  
14 Appropriations Act.

15 *Sec. 6. Applicability of Other Laws.* - The provisions of Batas Pambansa Big.  
16 881 or the Omnibus Election Code; Republic Act No. 7166, entitled, "An Act Providing  
17 for Synchronized National and Local Elections and for Electoral Reforms, Authorizing  
18 Appropriations Therefor, and for Other Purposes"; and other election laws not  
19 inconsistent herewith shall be applied to facilitate early voting for qualified senior  
20 citizens and PWDs.

21 *Sec. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within ninety (90) days from its  
22 effectivity, the Commission shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the  
23 implementation of this Act.

24 *Sec. 8. Separability Clause.* - If any provision of this Act is declared  
25 unconstitutional or invalid, any part or provisions hereof not affected thereby shall  
26 continue to be in full force and effect.

27 *Sec. 9. Repealing Clause.* - All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and  
28 regulations or parts thereof which are contrary or inconsistent with this Act are hereby  
29 repealed or modified accordingly.

30 *Sec. 10. Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its  
31 publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general  
32 circulation.

Approved,