

**Republic of the Philippines  
House of Representatives  
Quezon City**

**Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session**

**House Bill No. 0286**



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**Introduced by Representatives  
Estrellita B. Suansing and Horacio P. Suansing, Jr.**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Voting is a fundamental right of the people, one which defines the Philippines as a democratic country. In fact, absentee voting laws have been enacted to ensure that each Filipino will be able to exercise this right.


While absentee voting laws allow Filipinos residing or working overseas, government officials and employees, media practitioners, members of the armed forces and police force to vote for national elective positions, there is no law granting senior citizens and persons with disabilities the same privilege.

This bill seeks to broaden the access to the right of suffrage of the elderly and persons with disabilities who wish to register for early voting in order to eliminate possible impediments to electoral participation and ultimately improve the quality of the voting experience.

In this proposed measure, qualified senior citizens and persons with disabilities may opt to cast their ballots at accessible establishments designated by the Commission on Elections within seven (7) working days before the date set for the elections. Those who are not qualified shall vote on Election Day.

This bill is a re-file of House Bill No. 5661, which was approved on Third and Final Reading during the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress. In view of the foregoing, immediate approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

  
**ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING**  
1<sup>st</sup> District, Nueva Ecija

  
**HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.**  
2<sup>nd</sup> District, Sultan Kudarat

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**AN ACT  
PROVIDING FOR EARLY VOTING FOR QUALIFIED SENIOR CITIZENS AND  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS**

*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  
2 State to make voting convenient for senior citizens and persons with  
3 disabilities (PWDs) by giving them the option to vote earlier than the date set  
4 for the election.
- 5 **SEC. 2. Early Voting.** – For national and local elections, there shall be early  
6 voting where senior citizens and PWDs qualified to vote early may choose to  
7 cast their ballot at accessible establishments designated by the Commission  
8 on Elections (COMELEC) within seven (7) working days before the date set for  
9 the election.
- 10 **SEC. 3. Registration.** – There shall be a nationwide registration for senior  
11 citizens and PWDs who may wish to avail of their early voting privileges to  
12 qualify them for early voting. Those who are not registered under this Act shall  
13 vote on Election Day.
- 14 **SEC. 4. Obligations of the COMELEC.** – To ensure the smooth  
15 implementation of this Act, the COMELEC shall:
- 16       (a) Keep a record of senior citizens and PWDs who are registered  
17 voters;
- 18       (b) In coordination with local government units, the National Council  
19 on Disability Affairs, the Commission on Human Rights, the Department of  
20 Health and the Department of Interior and Local Government, design a  
21 registration system that shall allow senior citizens and PWDs to register and

1 opt for early voting in order to improve their voting experience in national and  
2 local elections;

3 (c) Ensure the full implementation of Republic Act No. 10366,  
4 entitled "An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish  
5 Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with  
6 Disabilities and Senior Citizens", such that polling places are safe, highly  
7 accessible and fitted with the necessary communication, visual and physical  
8 aids; and

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

11 **SEC. 5. Appropriations.** – The amount necessary to fund early voting by  
12 qualified senior citizens and PWDs in national and local elections shall be  
13 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

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

20 **SEC. 7. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** – Within ninety (90) days  
21 from the approval of this Act, the COMELEC shall, in consultation with other  
22 relevant government and nongovernment agencies, promulgate the rules and  
23 regulations necessary to implement this Act.

24 **SEC. 8. Separability Clause.** – If any provision or part hereof is declared  
25 unconstitutional, the remainder of this Act or any provision not affected shall  
26 remain in full force and effect.

27 **SEC. 9. Repealing Clause.** – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,  
28 rules and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this  
29 Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

30 **SEC. 10. Effectivity.** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
31 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,