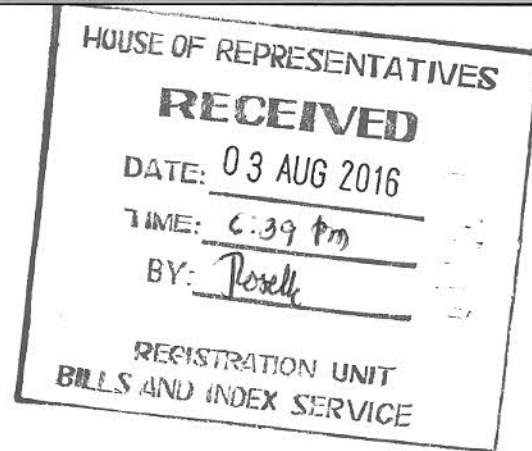


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City

Seventeenth Congress
First Regular Session

House Bill No. 2486



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

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 the same privilege.

The 2016 Voters Profile¹ show that there are 6,695,251 registered senior citizens in the country. Due to age-related conditions, many of our elderly are unable to exercise their right to vote on Election Day. This measure hopes to make sure that the senior voting populace are given the chance for their votes to be counted.

Just like the other absentee voting laws, senior citizens who are qualified to avail of the local absentee voting shall be able to vote for national elective positions: President, Vice President, Senators and Party-List Representatives.

Moreover, senior citizens who are qualified to avail of local absentee voting will not have to go to their local polling place on Election Day, relieving them of the discomfort of having to jostle their way through crowded polling places.

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


ESTRELLITA B. SUANSING
1st District, Nueva Ecija


HORACIO P. SUANSING, JR.
2nd District, Sultan Kudarat

¹ Philippine 2016 Voters Profile by Age Group, Commission on Elections as of 16 November 2015
(<http://www.comelec.gov.ph/?r=2016NLE/Statistics/Philippine2016VotersProfile/ByAgeGroup>)

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AN ACT
PROVIDING FOR LOCAL ABSENTEE VOTING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS

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

SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy. – The State shall ensure the free exercise of the right of suffrage by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law.

SEC. 2. Local Absentee Voting for Senior Citizens. – The Commission on Elections shall extend the right to vote under the local absentee voting system provided under existing laws and executive orders to senior citizens who are duly registered voters and who, on election day, may not be able to go to their polling places due to age-related conditions: *Provided*, That they shall be allowed to vote only for the positions of President, Vice President, Senators and Party-List Representatives.

SEC. 3. Implementing Rules and Regulations. – The Commission on Elections shall, within thirty (30) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the implementing rules and regulations which shall include a system of accreditation and verification of senior citizens who are qualified to avail of local absentee voting.

SEC. 4. Appropriations. – The initial funding of this Act shall be charged against the current year's appropriations or from any available savings of the Commission on Elections. Thereafter, such amount as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SEC. 5. Separability Clause. – If any part or provision of this Act shall be declared unconstitutional or invalid, other provisions hereof which are not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SEC. 6. Repealing Clause. – All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, resolutions, rules and regulations, other issuances, and parts thereof, which are

inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC. 7. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days following its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,