

Republic of the Philippines  
**House of Representatives**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

Eighteenth Congress  
First Regular Session



**HOUSE BILL NO. 5649**

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**Introduced by the Honorable Ann K. Hofer**

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**EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The Commission on Elections (COMELEC), with its more than 5,000 employees, is the constitutional body mandated to ensure free, orderly, honest, peaceful and credible elections. Sadly however, its important function in our society is somehow impaired primarily due to its understaffed offices.

Municipalities in the provinces are all too familiar in seeing only two employees (one Election Officer and one Election Assistant) in their local COMELEC offices despite the area having more than 10,000 regular voters and thousands of youth voters who are qualified to vote under the Sangguniang Kabataan. This inadequacy in manpower contributes to the very long queues of people during voter registration period and election day.

Aside from the lack of manpower, its employees also suffer from disparity in salary compared to their counterparts in other agencies. An Election Officer III, who heads a COMELEC office in a municipality, receives compensation that is four to six Salary Grades lower than those of a Public School District Supervisor, a Municipal Civil Registrar, and a Municipal Treasurer.

Hence, in recognition of their important role in preserving our democratic processes, this bill seeks to reorganize offices of the COMELEC, and reclassify and upgrade the plantilla positions thereof.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann K. Hofer'.

**ANN K. HOFER**  
Second District, Zamboanga Sibugay

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**AN ACT**  
**TO STRENGTHEN THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS BY ENHANCING ITS**  
**FISCAL AUTONOMY, REORGANIZING ITS OFFICES, UPGRADING EMPLOYEE**  
**SKILLS AND AUGMENTING THEIR COMPENSATION, ALLOWANCES AND**  
**BENEFITS, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER**  
**PURPOSES**

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

**SECTION 1. Declaration of Policy.** - In accordance with the equal protection clause of the Constitution, it is the State's responsibility to provide adequate and appropriate remuneration of employees with the ultimate goal of achieving equal pay for equal work in government service. The independence of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) which is guaranteed under Article IX(A)(1) of the 1987 Philippine Constitution would be further enhanced and its operations would be more effective and efficient if its employees are better compensated and its offices are better staffed and more secure.

**SEC. 2. Field Offices.** The Commission shall have the following field offices:

1. Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election Director with the rank of Director IV (SG 28) and assisted by the Assistant Regional Election Director with the rank of Director III (SG 27), Regional Election Attorney with the rank of Attorney V (SG 25), Supervising Administrative Officer V (SG 22), Assistant Election Specialist (SG 21), Accountant III (SG 19), Human Resource Management Officer III (SG 18), Supply Officer III (SG 18), Stenographic Reporter III (SG 11), Watchman (SG 7), Process Server (SG 5), Administrative Aide IV (SG 4), Utility



Worker (SG 3), Driver II (SG 3) and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.

2. Provincial Election Office headed by the Provincial Election Director with the rank of Director II (SG 26), assisted by the Administrative Officer V (SG 18), Assistant Election Specialist (SG 21), Computer Maintenance Technologist (SG 21), Watchman, Administrative Aide, Utility Worker, Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.
3. The National Capital Region shall be divided into five (5) administrative districts, such as North, South, East, Central and Manila District, or such number of administrative district as may be determined by the Commission which shall be headed by a District Election Director (DED) with the rank of Director II (SG 26), assisted by Assistant Election Specialist (SG 21), Computer Maintenance Technologist (SG 21), Administrative Officer V (SG 18), Administrative Aide, Watchman, Utility Worker, Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.
4. City Election Office headed by the City Election Specialist with the rank of Director I (SG 25), assisted by the Assistant Election Specialist (SG 21), Computer Maintenance Technologist (SG 21), Administrative Aide, Utility Worker and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.
5. Municipal Election Office headed by the Municipal Election Specialist (SG 24) assisted by the Assistant Election Specialist (SG 21), Administrative Aide, Watchman, Utility Worker and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.
6. There shall be a minimum of two (2) Assistant Election Specialists in all City and Municipal Election Office provided that for every additional 20,000 voters from 50,000 voters additional AES shall be automatically appointed.

7. There shall be a minimum of two (2) Assistant Election Specialists in all Provincial Election Offices provided that for every additional congressional district in the province, an additional AES shall be automatically appointed.
8. There shall be a minimum of three (3) Assistant Election Specialists in all Regional Election Offices provided that for every additional province in the region, an additional AES shall be automatically appointed.

The Commission may delegate its powers and functions or order the implementation or enforcement of its orders, rulings, or decisions through the heads of its field offices.

**SEC. 3. *Campaign Finance Department.*** –

1. In order to monitor the campaign contributions and expenditures of candidates and political parties as well as investigate and prosecute violations of such laws relating thereto, there shall be created a Campaign Finance Department (CFD) which will be headed by a Director IV and assisted by a Director III.
2. The CFD will also be complemented by a staff composed of Attorneys, Accountants, Special Investigators, Administrative Aides, Watchmen and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency for the said office.

**SEC. 4. *Reclassification and Upgrading of Plantilla Positions in the COMELEC Main and Field Offices.*** - All the remaining rank and file plantilla positions in the COMELEC Main and Field Offices shall be reclassified and upgraded accordingly by the COMELEC.

**SEC. 5. *Fiscal Autonomy.*** - The COMELEC shall enjoy fiscal autonomy. Appropriations for the COMELEC may not be reduced below the amount appropriated for the previous years and, after approval, shall be automatically and regularly released. The funds necessary to support the grant of special allowances and benefits provided herein and to ensure the effective implementation of this Act, may be sources from its savings and all other income, fines, fees and revenues collected by the COMELEC.



**SEC. 6. *Appropriations.*** – The amount necessary for the implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year's appropriations under the budget of the COMELEC including its savings. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the Annual General Appropriations Act.

**SEC. 7. *Rules and Regulations.*** – Within ninety (90) days from the approval of this Act, the Department of Budget and Management and the COMELEC shall adopt and issue the rules and regulations for the effective implementation of this Act.

**SEC. 8. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, decrees, orders, rules and regulations or other issuances or parts inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

**SEC. 9. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect in fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in one (1) newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines.

Approved,