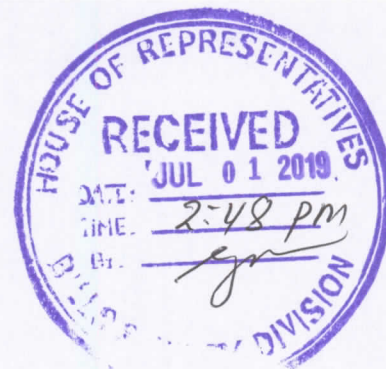


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL No. 0511

Introduced by
ACT Teachers Party-List Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO,
BAYAN MUNA Party-List Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE,
Rep. FERDINAND GAITE and Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT,
GABRIELA Women's Party Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS,
and **KABATAAN Party-List Rep. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO**

AN ACT
REORGANIZING THE OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

For decades, the principle of "equal pay for equal work" has not been felt by employees of the constitutional body, Commission on Elections (COMELEC). COMELEC constitutes around 6,000 employees nationwide, the majority of whom are from the rank-and-file receiving a mid- to low-level income. These employees express great dismay at the glaring disparity of their current salaries compared to fellow government employees with similar qualifications in other agencies, as well as other Constitutional bodies. Thus, in 2012, the COMELEC Employees' Union (COMELEC-EU) was organized to lobby for substantial and just salary increases for election workers, among other purposes.

In their research and consultations, the COMELEC-EU found that the disparity in their salary schedule, which dates back to the 1990s, as opposed to those in other agencies ranges from three to five salary grades (SG).

COMELEC lawyers, accountants, statisticians, and other professionals receive less than their counterparts in other agencies and it is only in COMELEC where they are classified as rank-and-file. For instance, COMELEC lawyers (Attorney II, Election Officers for cities, and Provincial Election Supervisors), are in SG 18, SG 21, or SG 24, receiving ₱40,637, ₱57,805 or ₱83,406 monthly, respectively. On the other hand, the Public Attorney's Office gives SG 25 to SG 29 (₱95,083 to ₱155,030) to its Public Attorneys (PA I

to PA V), while clerks of court in the Regional Trial Courts are at SG 24 to SG 26 (₱83,406 to ₱107,444).

The duties and jurisdiction of Provincial Election Supervisors, who manage areas with 500,000 to 1,000,000 voters, make them roughly equivalent to Division Superintendents in the Department of Education (DepEd). The former are at SG 24 (₱83,406) while the latter are at SG 26 (₱107,444). Election Officers manage areas with 20,000 to 400,000 voters, making them similarly situated with DepEd's District Supervisors. The former are at SG 12 to SG 21 (₱22,938 to ₱57,805).

Every step of the election process, from voters' registration to the canvassing of votes, is carried out because COMELEC employees toil all year round. They work even harder during the four-month-long election season, and are additionally saddled by flawed automation. It is unjust that poll workers—the very backbone of the democratic exercise—are rewarded by government with salaries disproportionate to their vital roles.

Answering COMELEC employees' call for decent salaries will also help insulate them from graft and corruption during elections, and compensate them for the risks they are forced to take due to election violence. This particular measure is supported by the COMELEC-EU.

For these reasons, approval of this bill is earnestly sought.

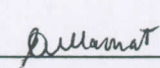


Rep. FRANCE L. CASTRO
ACT Teachers Party-List

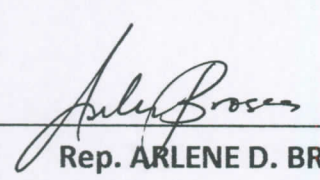


Rep. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
BAYAN MUNA Party-List

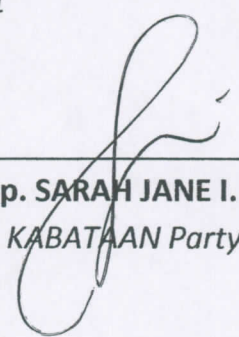
Rep. FERDINAND GAITE
BAYAN MUNA Party-List



Rep. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
BAYAN MUNA Party-List



Rep. ARLENE D. BROSAS
GABRIELA Women's Party



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AN ACT
REORGANIZING THE OFFICES OF THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “**The COMELEC Reorganization Act.**”

SECTION 2. *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 to employees with the ultimate goal of achieving equal pay for equal work in government service.

SECTION 3. *Field Offices.* – The Commission shall have the following field offices:

(1) Regional Election Office, headed by the Regional Election Director and assisted by the Assistant Regional Election Director, Regional Election Attorney with the Rank of Attorney V, Human Resource Management Officer, Budget Officer, Finance Officer, Assistant Election Specialist, Stenographic reporter III, Process Server, Watchman Officer, Administrative Aide, ORED Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service for the said office.

(2) Provincial Election Office, headed by the Provincial Election Director similar to the rank of Director II regardless of the number of registered voters, Computer Maintenance Technologist/Specialist (CMT/CMS) with SG-24, Assistant Election Specialist, Administrative Aide, OPES Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service 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 districts as may be determined by the Commission. It shall be headed and administratively supervised by a District Election Director with the rank of Director II, Computer Maintenance Technologist/Specialist (CMT/CMS) with SG-24, Administrative Assistant V, Administrative Aide, Driver and any such other subordinate officers or employees necessary in the exigency of service for the said office.

(4) City/Municipal Office, headed by City/Municipal Election Specialist with the rank of Director I regardless of his or her place of assignment.

(5) There shall be a minimum of two Assistant Election Specialists (AES) with SG-21 in every city or municipality provided that for every additional 20,000 voters from 50,000 voters, 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 field offices.

SECTION 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 their salaries upgraded accordingly by the Commission on Elections.

In no case shall diminution of salaries and benefits be caused to any employee.

SECTION 5. *Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days after the effectivity of this Act, the Department of Budget and Management and the Commission on Elections shall promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to implement the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 6. *Appropriations.* – The amount necessary for the initial implementation of this Act shall be charged against the current fiscal year's appropriations under the budget of the COMELEC. Thereafter, such sums as may be necessary for the

continued implementation of this Act shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

SECTION 7. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held unconstitutional, all other provisions not affected thereby shall continue to be in full force and effect.

SECTION 8. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, executive orders, presidential decrees, presidential proclamations, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

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

Approved,