# EDITORIAL — Election e-fraud | Philstar.com

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It’s good to hear the Commission on Elections banning the use of troll farms for the May 2025 midterm polls. Such troll farms have been used by certain candidates in recent elections to malign their rivals and influence public opinion. Whether the Comelec can enforce the ban effectively, however, remains to be seen.

The Comelec said it would get help from social media platforms in going after troll farms. Social media giants TikTok and Google recently announced that they are banning paid political advertisements on their platforms in the runup to the May 2025 midterm elections, in support of Comelec initiatives for clean and honest polls.

Meta announced a similar ban, but only during the official campaign period, to give candidates and parties with limited resources a chance to promote themselves and their advocacies on its popular platforms including Facebook and Instagram. Meta said it was also instituting measures to curb troll accounts on its platforms.

Worldwide in previous years, Meta has removed numerous accounts found to be violating its policy against coordinated inauthentic behavior and “foreign interference” – referring to CIB done in behalf of a foreign or government entity. Most of those removed were linked to “commercial entities and individuals associated with political campaigns and political offices,” Meta said. “Domestic campaigns like these raise a particularly complex challenge by blurring the line between healthy public debate and manipulation,” Meta pointed out.

The social media giants have the technical savvy and other resources to prevent the use of digital technology for undermining free elections. The Comelec doesn’t have such resources, so it will need to coordinate with the internet-based platforms to go after troll farms. The Comelec will also need sufficient tech support for enforcing its requirement, imposed on all candidates and party-list groups, to disclose all campaign paraphernalia using artificial intelligence.

Last month, the Comelec issued a resolution, giving all candidates, party-list organizations and their campaign teams until Dec. 13 to register their official social media accounts, pages, websites, podcasts, blogs, vlogs and other internet-based campaign platforms.

Poll fraud is going digital. The Comelec – and the nation – must be prepared for the many ways by which technology is being used to subvert the people’s mandate in elections.