

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**
First Regular Session

]
]
]



Senate
Office of the Secretary

25 AUG -7 P 2:51

SENATE

RECEIVED BY:

S.B. No. 1102

Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

**AN ACT
PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE MODES OF VOTING FOR PERSONS IN
VULNERABLE SITUATIONS TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT OF SUFFRAGE,
AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10366, PROVIDING
FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The right to vote is a key part of democracy as enshrined in the 1987 Philippine Constitution. However, many Filipinos in vulnerable situations, such as senior citizens, pregnant women, persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples, and persons deprived of liberty still face difficulties in exercising this right because of barriers in the voting process.

The Commission on Election's Vulnerable Sectors Office has observed several accessibility gaps during the recently concluded National and Local Elections held on May 12, 2025. These accessibility gaps included, among others, lack of medical aids in some polling precincts, difficulty locating names on the voter's list, no adequate

water stations, accessible rest rooms, and availability of facilities and equipment to help those with mobility issues.¹

Republic Act (RA) No. 10366, otherwise known as “An Act Authorizing the Commission on Elections to Establish Precincts Assigned to Accessible Polling Places Exclusively for Persons with Disabilities and Senior Citizens”, mandates the Commission to establish designated accessible polling places for senior citizens and persons with disabilities, allowing them to exercise their right to political participation without discrimination or restrictions.

This bill also seeks to amend RA 10366 by institutionalizing alternative modes of voting, such as early voting, postal or mail-in voting, designate accessible precincts, and such other places to ensure an efficient and expeditious voting process for vulnerable sectors, including senior citizens, pregnant women, person with disabilities, indigenous people, internally displaced persons, and persons deprived of liberty.

In view of the foregoing considerations, the urgent passage of this measure is earnestly sought.



WIN GATCHALIAN

¹ Lau Bacia, *DSWD cites snags, gains in voting process for seniors, PWDs*, INQUIRER, at <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/2072460/dswd-cites-snags-and-gains-in-voting-process-for-seniors-pwds> (last visited July 8, 2025).



Senate

Office of the Secretary

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES**
First Regular Session

]]]

25 AUG -7 P2 51

SENATE

RECEIVED BY: _____

S. B. No. 1102

Introduced by SEN. WIN GATCHALIAN

AN ACT
PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE MODES OF VOTING FOR PERSONS IN
VULNERABLE SITUATIONS TO EXERCISE THEIR RIGHT OF
SUFFRAGE, AMENDING FOR THE PURPOSE REPUBLIC ACT NO.
10366, PROVIDING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES

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

1 SECTION 1. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall ensure that senior
2 citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), pregnant women, and indigenous
3 peoples (IPs), internally displaced persons (IDPs), persons deprived of liberty
4 (PDLs), and in special circumstances, health workers, quarantined and
5 hospitalized persons, repatriated overseas voters, migrant workers, and
6 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) in distress, are able to exercise their right
7 to political participation without restrictions. The State shall devise systems and
8 procedures that will enhance accessibility in their voting process.

9

10 SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

11 (a) *Commission* refers to the Commission on Elections;

12 (b) *Senior citizens* refer to qualified voters who are sixty (60) years or
13 older.

14 (c) *Persons with disabilities* or *PWDs* refer to qualified voters who have
15 long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments which, in

1 interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation
2 in society on an equal basis with others.

3 (d) *Pregnant women* refer to qualified voters who are pregnant during
4 election day regardless of the number of trimester of pregnancy. For purposes
5 of local absentee voting, the term shall refer to qualified voters who are
6 pregnant at the time of registration for absentee voting and are expected to
7 remain pregnant during the period of absentee voting.

8 (e) *Indigenous peoples* refer to qualified voters who belong to a group
9 of people or homogenous societies identified by self-ascription and ascription
10 by others, who have continuously lived as organized community on communally
11 bounded and defined territory, and who have, under claims of ownership since
12 time immemorial, occupied, possessed and utilized such territories, sharing
13 common bonds of language, customs, traditions and other distinctive cultural
14 traits, or who have, through resistance to political, social and cultural inroads
15 of colonization, non-indigenous religions and cultures, became historically
16 differentiated from the majority of Filipinos. IPs shall likewise include people
17 who are regarded as indigenous on account of their descent from the
18 populations which inhabited the country, at the time of conquest or
19 colonization, or at the time of inroads of non-indigenous religions and cultures,
20 or the establishment of present state boundaries, who retain some or all of
21 their own social, economic, cultural and political institutions, but who may have
22 been displaced from their traditional domains or who may have resettled
23 outside their ancestral domains.

24 (f) *Internally displaced person* refers to a qualified voter who has been
25 forced or obliged to flee or leave one's home or place of habitual residence
26 within the national borders as a result of, or in order to avoid or minimize, the
27 effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized and/or organized violence,
28 violators of human rights, implementation of development projects, or natural
29 and human-induced or human-made hazards or disasters.

30 (g) *Person deprived of liberty* refers to a qualified voter, who is a
31 detainee, inmate, prisoner, or person under confinement or custody in any
32 other manner.

1 (h) *Health workers* shall mean qualified voters who engaged in health-
2 related work, and all persons employed in all hospitals, sanitarium, health
3 infirmaries, health centers, rural health stations, clinics, and other health-
4 related establishments owned and operated by the government or its political
5 subdivisions which original charters and shall include medical, allied health
6 professional, administrative and support personnel, regardless of their
7 employment status.

8 (i) *Repatriated overseas voter* refers to a citizen of the Philippines
9 registered and allowed to vote under Republic Act No. 9199, as amended, but
10 was repatriated due to special circumstances such as armed conflict, issues in
11 international relations, state of emergency or calamity, or any other analogous
12 circumstance beyond the control or fault of the voter.

13
14 SEC. 3. *Local Absentee Voting*. – The Commission shall extend the right
15 to vote under the Local Absentee Voting System to senior citizens, PWDs,
16 pregnant women, and IDPs qualified to vote, as provided in existing laws and
17 executive orders. They may cast their ballot at accessible establishments
18 designated by the Commission, for a period of not less than two (2) days within
19 seven (7) calendar days before the election.

20 In the event of a public health emergency, health workers on official
21 duty and quarantined and hospitalized persons qualified to vote may avail of
22 the right to Local Absentee Voting.

23 A repatriated overseas voter may avail of the right to Local Absentee
24 Voting only if such voter's repatriation was due to special circumstances such
25 as armed conflict, issues in international relations, state of emergency or
26 calamity, or any other analogous circumstances beyond the control or fault of
27 the voter.

28 The Commission shall designate accessible polling places, defined under
29 Section 2(j) of Republic Act No. 10366, as amended, for senior citizens, PWDs,
30 and pregnant women.

31 There shall be nationwide registration of senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant
32 women, IDPs, and in special circumstances, health workers, quarantined and

1 hospitalized persons, and repatriated overseas voters, who wish to avail of the
2 Local Absentee Voting. Those who are not registered under the Local Absentee
3 Voting system shall be allowed to vote on election day.

4
5 SEC. 4. *Emergency Accessible Polling Places (EAPP)*. – During election
6 day, the Commission shall designate rooms or makeshift or temporary polling
7 places at residence for senior citizens; jails, prison facilities or detention
8 centers; quarantine and hospital facilities; areas with a substantial number of
9 IDPs; remote areas; and in such other places as may be necessary to ensure
10 an efficient and expeditious voting process for senior citizens, PWDs, pregnant
11 women, IDPs, PDLs, IPs, and in special circumstances, health care workers on
12 duty and qualifies repatriated overseas voters.

13 The Commission shall ensure that, as far as practicable and necessary,
14 the EAPPs shall have the same features and offer the same assistive services
15 found in Accessible Polling Places, defined under Section 2(j) of Republic Act
16 No. 10366, as amended, and that the voting procedure in the EAPPs, including
17 the facilities and materials, is adequate, appropriate, accessible, easy to
18 understand and use, and that reasonable accommodation shall be granted to
19 the persons named in the preceding paragraph to ensure the full exercise of
20 their right of suffrage.

21
22 SEC. 5. Section 2(j) of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby amended to
23 read as follows:

24 "SEC. 2. *Definition of Terms*. – xxx

25 (a) xxx.

26 xxx

27 (j) *Accessible polling place* refers to the venue where the [Board of
28 Election Inspectors (BEIs)] **ELECTORAL BOARD** conducts election-
29 related proceedings and where the voters cast their votes. The
30 accessible polling place shall be located at the ground floor,
31 preferably near the entrance of the building, [and is] **READILY**
32 **ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTAION**, free of any physical

1 barriers and provided with [~~necessary services, including assistive~~
2 ~~devices~~] **NECESSARY INFRASTRUCTURE INCLUDING**
3 **ASSISTIVE DEVICES, TRANSPORT WHEELCHAIRS, RAMPS,**
4 **RAILINGS, SIDEWALKS, ADEQUATE LIGHTING,**
5 **VENTILATION, SUFFICIENT SIGNAGE AND DIRECTIONAL**
6 **SIGNS, LISTS OF CANDIDATES TRANSCRIBED IN BRAILLE,**
7 **AND OTHER FEATURES FOR PWDS, PREGNANT WOMEN, AND**
8 **SENIOR CITIZENS, AS WELL AS SUPPORT SERVICES OF**
9 **EXPERTS IN ASSISTING PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**
10 **SUCH AS SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETERS. ACCESSIBLE**
11 **POLLING PLACES SHALL BE LOCATED IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS,**
12 **TOWN HALLS OR PLAZAS, CIVIC CENTERS, COMMUNITY**
13 **CENTERS, OR OTHER SIMILARLY DESIGNATED VENUES. IN**
14 **DESIGNATING THE ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES, THE**
15 **COMMISSION SHALL GIVE PREFERENCE TO VENUES**
16 **DESIGNED WITH SPECIAL FEATURES TO ENSURE THE**
17 **SAFETY AND COMFORT OF SENIOR CITIZENS, PREGNANT**
18 **WOMEN, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES."**
19

20 SEC. 6. Section 9 of Republic Act No. 10366 is hereby deleted and a new
21 Section 9 shall be inserted to read as follows:

22 ***'SEC. 9. DESIGNATION OF ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES***
23 ***FOR SENIOR CITIZENS, PWDS, AND PREGNANT WOMEN. –***
24 **THE COMMISSION SHALL DESIGNATE AND ESTABLISH**
25 **ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES IN EVERY VOTING CENTER**
26 **FOR THE EXCLUSIVE USE OF PWDS, SENIOR CITIZENS, AND**
27 **PREGNANT WOMEN IN SUCH NUMBER AS MAY BE**
28 **SUFFICIENT TO ENSURE AN EXPEDIENT, SAFE, AND**
29 **COMFORTABLE VOTING PROCESS. NO PRIOR**
30 **MANIFESTATION SHALL BE REQUIRED FOR THE PERSONS**
31 **MENTIONED HEREIN TO AVAIL OF THE RIGHT TO VOTE IN**
32 **ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES."**

1 SEC. 7. *Provision for Transportation/Shuttle Service.* – The Commission
2 shall provide a system of transportation/shuttle services for the senior citizens,
3 PWDs, pregnant women, IPs, and IDPs during the period of Local Absentee
4 Voting under this Act and during election day to ensure that these sectors have
5 means of transportation to and from the polling places.
6

7 SEC. 8. *Establishment of Vulnerable Sectors Office (VSO) Under the*
8 *Commission.* – The Commission is hereby authorized to establish a VSO tasked
9 specifically to oversee and supervise the effective implementation of this Act:
10 *Provided,* That its Secretariat shall come from the existing Secretariat
11 personnel of the Commission.
12

13 SEC. 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within ninety (90) days
14 from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission shall, in consultation with other
15 relevant government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and civil
16 society organizations, promulgate the rules and regulations necessary to
17 implement this Act.
18

19 SEC. 10. *Appropriations.* – The initial amount for the implementation of
20 this Act shall be charged against the available appropriations of the
21 Commission. Thereafter, the amount necessary for its continuous
22 implementation shall be included in the annual General Appropriations Act.
23

24 SEC. 11. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
25 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions hereof not
26 affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.
27

28 SEC. 12. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is declared
29 invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining parts or provisions hereof not
30 affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

1 SEC. 13. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its
2 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,