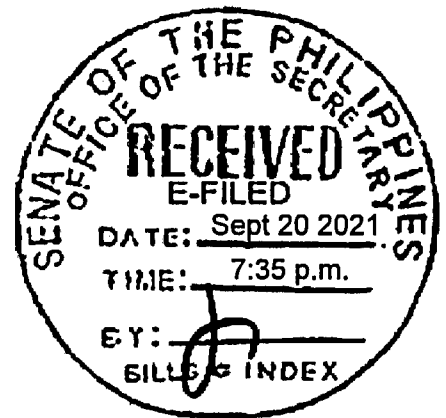


EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
Third Regular Session)

SENATE

S.B. No. 2408



Introduced by Senators Vicente C. Sotto III, Ralph G. Recto, Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, Franklin M. Drilon, Sonny Angara, Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay, Pia S. Cayetano, Leila M. De Lima, Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa, Win Gatchalian, Christopher "Bong" Go, Richard J. Gordon, Risa Hontiveros, Panfilo "Ping" M. Lacson, Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid, Imee R. Marcos, Emmanuel "Manny" D. Pacquiao, Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Grace L. Poe, Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., Francis "Tol" Tolentino, Joel Villanueva, and Cynthia A. Villar

**AN ACT
EXTENDING THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS FOR THE
2022 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Pursuant to its mandate under Section 8 of Republic Act No. 8189 or the "Voter's Registration Act of 1996", the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) promulgated COMELEC Resolution No. 10549¹ on July 18, 2019 and COMELEC Resolution No. 10635² on January 10, 2020, setting voter registration for the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections (NLE) from January 20, 2020 until September 30, 2021³.

COMELEC set the September 30, 2021 deadline before the COVID-19 pandemic. In this connection, COMELEC could not have anticipated the adverse impact of the pandemic on voter registration and must make the necessary adjustments to allow more unregistered potential voters to register.

In fact, voter registration was suspended several times due to the adverse effect of Covid-19.

On March 9, 2020, COMELEC suspended voter registration starting March 10, 2020 due to the COVID-19.⁴ After a series of extensions, voter registration was suspended until August 31, 2020 or more than five and a half months⁵.

In late March 2021, voter registration in Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite (NCR Plus), was suspended due to the imposition of ECQ and/or MECQ.⁶ Voter registration in NCR Plus resumed after nearly two months on May 17, 2021, when quarantine restrictions relaxed to general community quarantine on May 15, 2021⁷.

¹ RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

² SUPPLEMENTAL RULES AND REGULATIONS OF RESOLUTION NO. 10549 PROMULGATED ON JULY 18, 2019 ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

³ See COMELEC Resolution No. 10549, sec. 4

⁴ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/comelec-suspends-voter-registration-coronavirus-threat>

⁵ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/comelec-extends-suspension-voter-registration-june-30-2020>;

<https://ncwsinfo.inquircr.net/1299499/votcr-registration-suspended-until-august-31-comelec>

⁶ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/comelec-voter-registration-2022-resumes-ncr-plus-may17-2021>

⁷ Id.

In early August 2021, COMELEC again suspended voter registration in ECQ and MECQ areas, including Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal, Laguna, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Lucena, etc., for at least two weeks⁸.

As of June 2021, COMELEC reported that there are around 60 million registered voters for the 2022 elections. This is short of the 73.3 million projected voting population reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) in February 2021.


As a result of the series of suspension of voter registration, the Filipino people have been clamoring for the extension of the deadline of voter registration.


In *Kabataan Party-list v. Commission on Elections* (G.R. No. 221318, December 16, 2015), the Supreme Court recognized COMELEC's power to set the deadline of voter registration, provided no registration may be done during the period starting one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election. The Court also recognized COMELEC's prerogative in setting the deadline for registration, taking into consideration administrative necessities and other exigencies in setting such date.

Considering the five-and-a-half-month suspension (approximately 28.3% of the entire registration period) of voter registration across the country and, after that, month-long suspensions in areas under ECQ and MECQ brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic (some areas, such as Metro Manila, lost up to 38.6% of the entire registration period), COMELEC has the prerogative to set the deadline of voter registration on a later date but before January 9, 2022, taking into consideration this public health emergency, in order to prevent voter disenfranchisement.

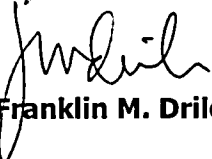
Given the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic, it is necessary to extend the voter registration, in order to give unregistered Filipinos of voting age ample time to register, and eventually exercise their constitutional right to vote and avoid disenfranchisement of large number of qualified voters.

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


Sen. Vicente C. Sotto III


Sen. Ralph G. Recto


Sen. Juan Miguel F. Zubiri


Sen. Franklin M. Drilon

⁸<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1149652>.



Sen. Sonny Angara



Sen. Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay



Sen. Pia S. Cayetano



Sen. Leila M. De Lima




Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa



Sen. Win Gatchalian




SENATOR CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" T. GO



Sen. Richard J. Gordon



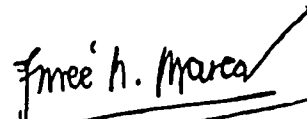
Sen. Risa Hontiveros



Sen. Panfilo "Ping" M. Lacson



Sen. MANUEL "LITO" M. LAPID



Sen. Imee R. Marcos



Sen. Emmanuel "Manny" D.
Pacquiao



Sen. FRANCIS N. PANGILINAN



Sen. GRACE POE



Sen. Ramon Bong Revilla Jr.



Sen. Francis "Tol" Tolentino



Sen. Joel Villanueva

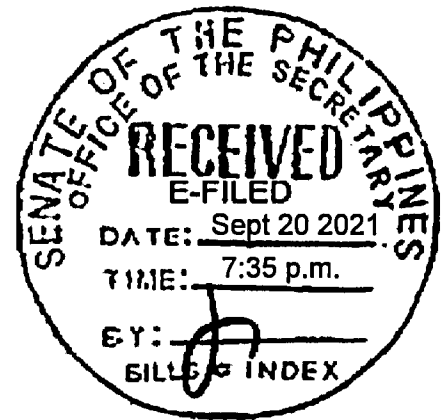


Sen. Cynthia A. Villar

EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS OF THE)
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SENATE

Senate Bill No. 2408



Introduced by Senators Vicente C. Sotto III, Ralph G. Recto, Juan Miguel F. Zubiri, Franklin M. Drilon, Sonny Angara, Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay, Pia S. Cayetano, Leila M. De Lima, Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa, Win Gatchalian, Christopher Lawrence T. Go, Richard J. Gordon, Risa Hontiveros, Panfilo "Ping" M. Lacson, Manuel "Lito" M. Lapid, Imee R. Marcos, Emmanuel "Manny" D. Pacquiao, Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan, Grace L. Poe, Ramon Bong Revilla Jr., Francis "Tol" Tolentino, Joel Villanueva, and Cynthia A. Villar

AN ACT
EXTENDING THE REGISTRATION OF VOTERS FOR THE
2022 NATIONAL AND LOCAL ELECTIONS

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

- 1 **SECTION. 1. *Extension of Registration of Voters.*** – The registration of voters for
2 the 2022 National and Local Elections is hereby extended to October 31, 2021.
- 3 **SEC. 2. *Repealing Clause.*** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders,
4 memoranda, circulars, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof, which
5 are inconsistent with this Act is hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.
- 6 **SEC 3. *Effectivity Clause.*** - This Act shall take effect immediately after its publication
7 in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,