



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

H. No. 5509

BY REPRESENTATIVES ARQUIZA, CASIÑO, COLMENARES, ILAGAN, MARIANO,
DE JESUS, TINIO, PALATINO, ACOPI, CO, BATOCABE, GARBIN, KHO (D.),
FERRER (A.), SALVACION, TEODORO AND MARCOLETA, PER
COMMITTEE REPORT NO. 1522

AN ACT MANDATING THE USE OF HIGHLY ACCESSIBLE POLLING PLACES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, SENIOR CITIZENS AND EXPECTANT MOTHERS

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

1 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Polling
2 Center Accessibility Act of 2011”.

3 SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – The State shall ensure the right to
4 suffrage of all Filipinos, unless disqualified by law. The government shall
5 establish procedures to make polling centers accessible and responsive to the
6 physical limitations of persons with disabilities, senior citizens and expectant
7 mothers.

8 SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

9 (a) *Highly accessible polling place* refers to the place where the Board
10 of Election Inspectors (BEIs) conduct election-related proceedings such as
11 registration, voting and the like, that is located on the ground floor, preferably
12 near the entrance of the building where these election-related activities are

1 held, thus facilitating the exercise of the right to suffrage by persons with
2 disabilities, senior citizens and expectant mothers.

3 (b) *Voting center* refers to the building or place where special polling
4 activities take place.

5 (c) *Persons with disabilities* or *PWDs* refer to those persons with
6 physical, physiological or sensory impairment or those persons suffering from
7 restrictions of different abilities to perform an activity in the manner or within
8 the range considered normal to a human being and at the same time, possess
9 the qualifications and none of the disqualifications of a voter.

10 (d) *Senior citizens* refer to those who have physical limitations due to
11 age and at the same time, possess the qualifications and none of the
12 disqualifications of a voter.

13 (e) *Expectant mothers* refer to visibly pregnant women and may have
14 difficulty going to the polling precinct due to the fact that they are expecting,
15 and at the same time, possess the qualifications and none of the
16 disqualifications of a voter.

17 (f) *Commission* refers to the Commission on Elections.

18 SEC. 4. *Use of Ground Floor Polling Places for PWDs, Senior Citizens*
19 *and Expectant Mothers.* – The government, through the Commission, shall
20 designate highly accessible polling rooms for PWDs, senior citizens and
21 expectant mothers. The rooms shall be located at the ground floor of each
22 polling center preferably near the entrance of the building. Instead of
23 proceeding to their precincts, PWDs, senior citizens and expectant mothers
24 shall be allowed to vote in the special rooms where extra ballot boxes of their
25 assigned precincts shall be provided. At the end of voting, the counting of
26 ballots and transmission of votes shall likewise take place in the same polling
27 precinct.

1 SEC. 5. *Number of Highly Accessible Polling Rooms.* – The
2 Commission will determine the number of highly accessible polling rooms to
3 be designated based on the number of elderly and disabled registered voters.

4 SEC. 6. *Appropriations.* – The Chairman of the Commission shall
5 include in the Commission's program the implementation of this Act, the initial
6 funding of which shall be charged against the current year's appropriations or
7 from any available savings of the Commission. Thereafter, such amount as
8 may be necessary for the continued implementation of this Act shall be
9 included in the annual General Appropriations Act.

10 SEC. 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60)
11 days from the effectivity of this Act, the Commission shall promulgate and
12 issue the rules and regulations for the implementation of this Act.

13 SEC. 8. *Separability Clause.* – Should any provision of this Act be
14 declared invalid or unconstitutional, the validity or constitutionality of the
15 other provisions shall not be affected thereby.

16 SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, letters of instruction,
17 resolutions, orders, ordinances or parts thereof which are inconsistent with the
18 provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

19 SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15)
20 days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,

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