

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Philippines



SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **5986**

INTRODUCED BY REPRESENTATIVE ALFRED VARGAS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

It is the responsibility of the State to educate its citizens on their right to vote and to ingrain in them the duty to preserve the integrity of the electoral process.

One strategic and institutional platform for this is through the educational system.

This bill seeks to establish the integration of voter education into the junior and senior high school curricula to arm these students with the right tools in voting and equip them with discerning minds as they consequently participate in both the local and national elections at the right age. This will also teach them how to become responsible voters who have a profound understanding of their country's political landscape and electoral process, and from this empowerment, become the pillars of democracy in the country.

In view of the foregoing, the passage of this bill is earnestly sought.


ALFRED VARGAS

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AN ACT
INTEGRATING VOTER EDUCATION IN THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL CURRICULA

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as the “Compulsory Voter Education Act.”

SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to enlighten citizens on their right to vote and to inculcate in them the duty to preserve the integrity of the electoral process through the educational system.

SEC. 3. *Definition of Voter Education.* – As used in this Act, “Voter education” means dissemination of information, materials and programs designed to inform citizens about the specifics and mechanics of the voting process. It includes providing information on the right to suffrage, its importance, and the proper exercise thereof, as well as information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints.

SEC. 4. *Integration of Voter Education in the Junior and Senior High School Curricula.* – Voter Education shall be integrated by the Department of Education (DepEd) in the junior and senior high school curricula, effective at the start of the school year immediately following one (1) year from the effectivity of this Act. The Commission on Election (COMELEC) shall assist DepEd in preparing teachers during the one-year transition period by conducting seminars and trainings on the electoral system and process. COMELEC shall certify that the teacher, after attending such seminars and trainings, is qualified to teach topics relating to the electoral system and process.

SEC. 5. Voter Education Syllabus. -

- A. Voter education. – The main syllabus shall include, but not limited to, the following thematic areas:
1. Suffrage. – This area introduces to students the right to vote accorded by the Constitution, and other rights enabling citizens to participate in the conduct of public affairs;
 2. Electoral system and process. – This area deals with the general principles underlying the present electoral system, and legislation regulating all the phases of election namely, pre-election, election proper, and post-election. It discusses the proper conduct of elections including registration, casting of ballots, and counting of votes;
 3. Educated voting. – This area focuses on the attitude and behavior a voter must adopt to ensure fair, free, and honest elections. It emphasizes the importance of participating in elections in a manner that shall stimulate and strengthen democracy.
- B. Supplementary topics. – This curriculum should have additional topics and studies on the political system of the country, the contextual background of elections, current political, social, and economic issues affecting the elections, and the possible solutions to address them.
- C. Other subject matters. – Other areas of voter education may be included in the syllabus.

SEC. 6. Implementing Agency. – The Secretary of Education is hereby authorized and directed to adopt a system to implement and carry out the provisions of this Act. The Secretary of Education shall, within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, promulgate the rules and regulations, including those of a disciplinary nature, to carry out and enforce the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 7. Educational Materials. – It shall be obligatory on all schools offering secondary education to keep in their libraries an adequate number of copies of the textbooks, primers, and leaflets on voter education to be issued by the DepEd. The DepEd shall determine the adequacy of the number of books, depending upon the enrollment of the schools.

SEC. 8. Separability Clause. – If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or unconstitutional, the remainder of the law or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain valid and subsisting.

SEC. 9. *Repealing Clause.* – Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule or regulation contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provision of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

SEC. 10. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,