



Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 Quezon City



EIGHTEENTH (18TH) CONGRESS
 Third Regular Session

HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 2139

Introduced by REP. EDGAR R. ERICE, REP. JOCELYN S. LIMKAICHONG, REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE, REP. FRANCIS GERALD A. ABAYA, REP. ISAGANI S. AMATONG, REP. EMMANUEL A. BILLONES, REP. GABRIEL H. BORDADO JR., REP. EDGARDO M. CHATTO, REP. PAUL R. DAZA, REP. MUJIV S. HATAMAN, REP. EDCEL C. LAGMAN, REP. ROMULO PEÑA JR., REP. STELLA LUZ S. QUIMBO, REP. JOSEPHINE Y. RAMIREZ-SATO, REP. ALFONSO V. UMALI JR.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17

RESOLUTION
URGING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO EXTEND THE
DEADLINE FOR VOTER REGISTRATION FROM SEPTEMBER 30, 2021 TO
OCTOBER 31, 2021 TO PREVENT VOTER DISENFRANCHISEMENT
BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is constitutionally-mandated to “[e]nforce and administer all laws and regulations relative to the conduct of an election, plebiscite, initiative, referendum, and recall”¹ and has the power to determine periods to accomplish pre-election activities, such as voter registration²;

WHEREAS, registration is part and parcel of the right to vote and an indispensable element in the election process³;

WHEREAS, under Section 8 of Republic Act No. 8189 or the Voter’s Registration Act of 1996, COMELEC shall establish a system of continuing

¹ Const., art. IX-C, sec. 2(1).

² See *Kabataan Party-list v. Commission on Elections*, G.R. No. 221318, December 16, 2015.

³ See *Akbayan-Youth v. Commission on Elections*, G.R. No. 147066, March 26, 2001.

18 registration of voters.⁴ However, no registration shall be conducted during the
19 period starting one hundred twenty (120) days before a regular election and ninety
20 (90) days before a special election⁵;

21

22 *WHEREAS*, COMELEC promulgated COMELEC Resolution No. 10549⁶ on
23 July 18, 2019 and COMELEC Resolution No. 10635⁷ on January 10, 2020, setting
24 voter registration for the May 9, 2022 National and Local Elections (NLE) from
25 January 20, 2020 until September 30, 2021⁸;

26

27 *WHEREAS*, on March 9, 2020, COMELEC suspended voter registration
28 starting March 10, 2020 due to the COVID-19.⁹ After a series of extensions, voter
29 registration was suspended until August 31, 2020 or more than five and a half
30 months¹⁰;

31

32 *WHEREAS*, on August 12, 2020, COMELEC promulgated COMELEC
33 Resolution No. 10674 which set the protocols on conducting voter registration
34 under the new normal. Under COMELEC Resolution No. 10674, voter registration
35 in areas under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and modified enhanced
36 community quarantine (MECQ) shall be suspended for the duration of the ECQ or
37 MECQ status.¹¹

38

39 *WHEREAS*, in late March 2021, voter registration in Metro Manila, Bulacan,
40 Rizal, Laguna, and Cavite (NCR Plus), was suspended due to the imposition of
41 ECQ and/or MECQ.¹² Voter registration in NCR Plus resumed after nearly two
42 months on May 17, 2021, when quarantine restrictions relaxed to general
43 community quarantine on May 15, 2021¹³;

44

45 *WHEREAS*, in early August 2021, COMELEC again suspended voter
46 registration in ECQ and MECQ areas, including Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal,
47 Laguna, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro, Lucena, etc., for at least two weeks¹⁴;

48

49 *WHEREAS*, in a hearing of the Senate Committee on Electoral Reforms and
50 People's Participation on February 18, 2021, the Philippine Statistics Authority

⁴ Rep. Act. No. 8189, sec. 8.

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ RULES AND REGULATIONS ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING REGISTRATION OF VOTERS.

⁷ SUPPLEMENTAL RULES AND REGULATIONS OF RESOLUTION NO. 10549 PROMULGATED ON JULY 18, 2019 ON THE RESUMPTION OF THE SYSTEM OF CONTINUING REGISTRATION OF VOTERS

⁸ See COMELEC Resolution No. 10549, sec. 4

⁹ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/comelec-suspends-voter-registration-coronavirus-threat>

¹⁰ <https://www.rappler.com/nation/comelec-extends-suspension-voter-registration-june-30-2020>; <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1299499/voter-registration-suspended-until-august-31-comelec>

¹¹ See COMELEC Resolution No. 10674, par. 1.

¹² <https://www.rappler.com/nation/elections/comelec-voter-registration-2022-resumes-ncr-plus-may-17-2021>

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1149652>

51 (PSA) mentioned that the projected voting population for the 2022 NLE is at 73.3
52 million. As of June 2021, the COMELEC said that there are around 60 million
53 registered voters as of June 2021, leaving around 13.3 million unregistered
54 potential voters;

55

56 **WHEREAS**, while it is also important for COMELEC to have enough time to
57 prepare the final list of voters, which is a prerequisite for the preparation and
58 completion of the Project of Precincts (POP),¹⁵ a one-month extension will not
59 unduly hamper or delay COMELEC's preparation of the POP. In fact, in previous
60 national and local elections, COMELEC set deadlines that are on or beyond
61 October 31 of the year before elections, namely:

62

National and Local Elections	Voter Registration Deadline
2001	December 27, 2000 ¹⁶
2004	October 31, 2003 ¹⁷
2007	December 31, 2006 ¹⁸
2010	January 9, 2010 ¹⁹
2013	October 31, 2012 ²⁰
2016	October 31, 2015 ²¹

63

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

71

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

80

¹⁵ See *Kabataan Party-list v. Commission on Elections*, G.R. No. 221318, December 16, 2015.

¹⁶ *Akbayan-Youth v. Commission on Elections*, G.R. No. 147066, March 26, 2001.

¹⁷ COMELEC Resolution No. 6216 dated July 18, 2003.

¹⁸ <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/24729/voters-have-only-until-dec-31-to-register-comelec/story/>

¹⁹ *Kabataan Party-list Representative Raymond V. Palatino v. Commission on Elections*, G.R. No. 189868, December 15, 2009.

²⁰ COMELEC Resolution No. 9149 dated February 11, 2011.

²¹ COMELEC Resolution No. 9853 dated February 19, 2014.

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

85

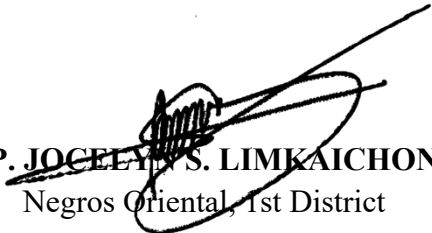
86 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, as it is hereby resolved to express
87 the sense of the House or Representatives urging the Commission on Elections
88 (COMELEC) to extend the deadline for voter registration from September 30, 2021
89 to October 31, 2021 to prevent voter disenfranchisement brought about by the
90 COVID-19 pandemic.

91

92 *Adopted,*



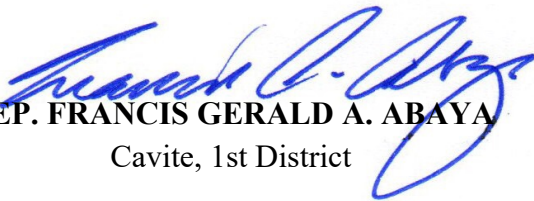
REP. EDGAR R. ERICE
Calboacan City, 2nd District



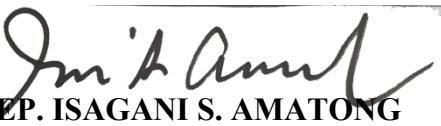
REP. JOCELYN S. LIMKAICHONG
Negros Oriental, 1st District



REP. JOSE CHRISTOPHER Y. BELMONTE
Quezon City, 6th District



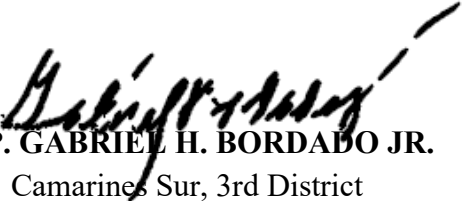
REP. FRANCIS GERALD A. ABAYA
Cavite, 1st District



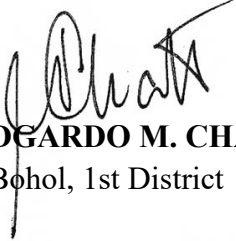
REP. ISAGANI S. AMATONG
Zamboanga del Norte, 3rd District




REP. EMMANUEL A. BILLONES
Capiz, 1st District




REP. GABRIEL H. BORDADO JR.
Camarines Sur, 3rd District




REP. EDGARDO M. CHATTO
Bohol, 1st District



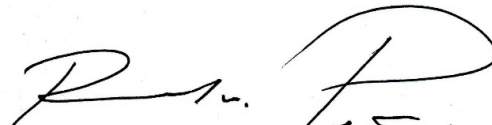
REP. PAUL R. DAZA
Northern Samar, 1st District




REP. MUJIV S. HATAMAN
Basilan, Lone District




REP. EDCEL C. LAGMAN
Albay, 1st District




REP. ROMULO "KID" PEÑA JR.
Makati City, 1st District



REP. STELLA LUZ S. QUIMBO
Marikina City, 2nd District



REP. JOSEPHINE "NENE" Y. RAMIREZ - SATO
Occidental Mindoro, Lone District



REP. ALFONSO V. UMALI JR.
Oriental Mindoro, 2nd District