



**LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH SERVICE**  
**QUICK NOTES**  
*Second Regular Session, 19<sup>th</sup> Congress*

**Public Hearing of the Committee on Electoral Reforms and People's Participation  
joint with the Committee on Finance**

**Chairperson: Sen. Imee R. Marcos**

**13 May 2024, Monday, 1:00 PM, Sen. G. T. Pecson Room, Senate**

**Re: 1. New Overseas Voting Act**

**S. No. 172—Sen. Francis “Tol” N. Tolentino**

**2. Early Voting**

**S. No. 2239—Sen. Cynthia A. Villar**

**S. No. 2361—Sen. Manuel “Lito” M. Lapid**

**S. No. 2482—Sen. Joseph Victor “JV” G. Ejercito**

**H. No. 7576—Reps. J.M. Ferrer, et. al.**

**3. Automatic Resignation upon Filing of Certificate of Candidacy**

**S. No. 1683—Sen. Raffy T. Tulfo**

**4. Prohibiting the Use of Plastic Posters as Campaign Materials**

**S. No. 1762—Sen. Raffy T. Tulfo**

**5. Static and LED Billboards as Lawful Election Propaganda**

**S. No. 2624—Sen. Imee R. Marcos**

**6. Elective Members of Sangguniang Panlalawigan of the Province of Laguna**

**H. No. 3946—Reps. Dan S. Fernandez, Marlyn B. Alonte, et. al.**

**7. Amending the Grounds for Substitution of Candidates**

**S. No. 1062—Sen. Win Gatchalian**

**S. No. 1139—Sen. Joel Villanueva**

## **8. Inquiry on the Status of the Party-List Registration and Accreditation**

### **Background**

- The 1987 Philippine Constitution ensures every citizen's right to vote, prompting the need for laws that protect this right, especially for overseas voters like seafarers, who currently show low electoral participation. This situation underscores an urgent need for legislative reforms.
- Additionally, it is important to enhance voting inclusivity for groups facing significant barriers, such as senior citizens, pregnant women, and individuals with disabilities, aiming to ensure that every voice contributes to the nation's democratic process.
- To maintain public trust, it is being recommended that elected officials are ipso facto resigned from their position if they seek another public office, promoting accountability and efficiency.
- Environmental concerns are also addressed with proposed bans on plastic campaign materials due to their toxic and long-lasting pollution.
- It is also proposed to end the practice of candidate substitution due to voluntary withdrawal to prevent exploitation and ensure fair competition.
- Lastly, the Commission on Elections is to tackle the low engagement of party-list groups in upcoming elections, highlighting a need for better compliance and representation.
- These reforms collectively aim to refine electoral processes, bolster democratic engagement, and uphold the Constitution's principles of public service and accountability.

### **Highlights**

1. S. No. 172 aims to broaden voting options for overseas Filipinos by allowing them to register and vote via mail or other electronic methods as determined by the Comelec, based on the preferences indicated at registration. To implement this, the Comelec's Office for Overseas Voting (OFOV) will collaborate with the Department of Foreign Affairs, Department of Migrant Workers, Department of Labor and Employment, and other relevant agencies to collect biometric data from overseas voters, exclusively for registration purposes. The bill also guarantees the protection of the privacy rights of these voters' data.
2. The Early Voting measures seek to establish early voting specifically for senior citizens, pregnant women, and individuals with disabilities, allowing them to cast their ballots seven days prior to the official election date, thus avoiding the challenges of the actual voting day.

To facilitate this, there will be a nationwide registration process for senior citizens and persons with disabilities (PWDs) to access early voting. The Comelec will be responsible for keeping a registry of these voters, in collaboration with local government units and other government agencies.

3. It is mandated under S. No. 1683 to declare an elective official ipso facto resigned from his elective office upon the filing of his certificate of candidacy for another position.
4. S. No. 1762 seeks to prohibit the use of plastic posters during the campaign season, amending for the purpose Section 3 of RA 9006, as amended, otherwise known as the Fair Election Act.
5. S. No. 2624 proposes to legally permit the use of static and LED billboards and other outdoor advertising as valid election propaganda. Static billboards typically involve printed materials on tarpaulins or boards, whereas LED or digital billboards feature electronic displays managed remotely. Each legitimate candidate or registered political party vying for a national office is entitled to two months of outdoor advertising on designated static or LED billboards, acquired either through purchase or donation. However, the bill restricts placing these advertisements within a one-kilometer radius of another static or LED billboard associated with the same candidate or party.
6. Under H. No. 3946, the cities of San Pedro, Sta. Rosa, and Binan in the Province of Laguna will each be entitled to two members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. In the national and local elections following the measure's approval, eligible voters in these cities will cast separate votes for two members of the Sangguniang Panlalawigan.
7. It is the aim of S. Nos. 1062 and 1139 to curb abuses by eliminating the option of substitution when a candidate from a political party withdraws from their candidacy. Additionally, the measure introduces incapacity as a ground for substituting political party candidates.
8. The Comelec started accepting in 2022 applications for registration of political and party-list groups intending to participate in the May 2025 elections. The deadline for registration was set last December 29, 2023.<sup>1</sup>

### **Possible Points for Discussion**

1. What innovative technological infrastructure and safeguards would need to be in place to facilitate secure and reliable voting through electronic channels?
2. What logistical challenges could arise in implementing early voting, particularly regarding registration, polling station setup, ballot handling, security, etc.? How can

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<sup>1</sup> <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1770266/comelec-deadline-for-party-list-applications-for-2025-polls-on-dec-29#ixzz8ZnH6PrOt>

these challenges be effectively addressed to ensure the smooth operation of the early voting process? What additional costs would this entail?

3. What challenges could arise in implementing this provision, particularly in cases where multiple officials from the same jurisdiction are running for different positions?

How would the amendment to existing law influence the dynamics of elections, candidate selection, and campaign strategies?

4. What are the alternative materials for campaign posters that are more cost-effective and environmentally friendly?
5. How could static and LED billboards and other outdoor advertising mediums impact the fairness and equity of elections, considering the possible unequal access to these platforms because of the limited financial means of individuals or parties?
6. Analyze the impact of allocating two Sangguniang Panlalawigan members to each city on the local governance dynamics within Laguna, focusing on the benefits of improved representation for these cities in provincial policy-making.
7. What are the past abuses relative to candidate substitution, and how eliminating this option could reduce such abuses and ensure candidate commitment post-nomination?
8. Was the deadline set for party-list groups to submit their manifestation of intent a fair and equitable chance allowed by the Comelec for them to participate in the 2025 elections?

Review election law provisions that mandate this process and consider how registration acts as a vetting mechanism to confirm the legitimacy and qualification of organizations wishing to participate in elections.

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