

[PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 1896, January 11, 1984]

AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR A GENERAL REGISTRATION OF VOTERS, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR, AND OTHER SIMILAR PURPOSES.

SECTION 1. *General registration of voters.* — There shall be a general registration of all voters throughout the Philippines in accordance with the provisions of this Decree.

The lists of voters of every city and municipality prepared in accordance herewith shall be used in the May 14, 1984 election for Members of the Batasang Pambansa and every election which may be held thereafter. The existing lists of voters are hereby declared null and void and without further force and effect for purposes of voting after the January 27, 1984 national plebiscite.

SEC. 2. *Permanent list of voters every twelve years.* — There shall be in each city and municipality a permanent list of voters which shall be completely renewed every twelve years. A new list of voters shall be prepared for the elections which will be held in nineteen hundred and eighty-four and said list with such additions, cancellations, and corrections as may be proper shall constitute the permanent list of voters in each subsequent election until its renewal in nineteen hundred and ninety-six.

SEC. 3. *Necessity of registration to be entitled to vote.* — In order that a qualified elector may vote in any election, he must be registered in the permanent list of voters for the city or municipality in which he resides.

SEC. 4. *Who may be registered in the list.* — All persons having complied with the requisites herein prescribed for the registration of voters shall be registered in the list, *provided* they possess all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications of a voter. Any person who may not have on the date of registration the age or period of residence required may also be registered upon proof that on the date of the election he shall have such qualifications.

SEC. 5. *Qualifications prescribed for a voter.* — Every citizen of the Philippines, not otherwise disqualified by law, eighteen years of age or over, who shall have resided in the Philippines for one year and in the city or municipality wherein he proposes to vote for at least six months immediately preceding the election, may register as a voter.

Any person who transfers to another city or municipality solely by reason of his occupation; profession; employment in private or public service; educational activities; work in military or naval reservations; service in the army, navy or air force, the constabulary or national police force; or confinement or detention in government institutions in accordance with law shall be deemed not to have lost his original residence. *Provided*, That he may register as a voter of the city or municipality where he is residing for the foregoing reasons if on the date of the election he has already resided therein for at least six months.

SEC. 6. *Voters in New Settlement Areas.* — Residents relocated to new settlement areas within six months immediately preceding an election shall be allowed to

register in the new place of resettlement.

SEC. 7. *Disqualifications.* — The following shall be disqualified from voting:

- a. Any person who has been sentenced by final judgment to suffer imprisonment for not less than one year, such disability not having been removed by plenary pardon: *Provided*, however, That any person disqualified to vote under this paragraph shall automatically reacquire the right to vote upon expiration of five years after service of sentence.
- b. Any person who has been adjudged by final judgment by competent court of having violated his oath of allegiance to the Republic of the Philippines.
- c. Insane or feeble-minded persons.

SEC. 8. *Registration of voters.* — For the registration of voters in nineteen hundred and eighty-four and every twelve years thereafter, the citizens election committee of each voting center shall hold four meetings in the place designated as voting centers on the ninth Saturday and Sunday and on the eighth Saturday and Sunday before the date of the regular election to be held. At these meetings, the Committee shall prepare as *provided* in this Decree eight copies of the list of voters of the voting center.

For the May 14, 1984 elections, said meetings shall be held on March 17, 18, 24 and 25, 1984: *Provided*, That if after the last day of registration the Commission on Elections should decide that a substantial number of qualified voters have not registered, it may authorize additional registration days in order that said voters shall not be deprived of their right of suffrage.

SEC. 9. *Postponement of Registration.* — When for any serious cause such as force majeure, violence, terrorism, or other analogous causes of such a nature, or where there are ongoing military operations that the holding of the registration on the prescribed dates should become impossible in any political subdivision, the Commission, after due notice, shall postpone the registration therein to such time as it may deem necessary or undertake such other measures necessary in order in effectively implement the provisions of this Decree.

SEC. 10. *Citizens election committee.* — There shall be a citizens election committee in every voting center composed of two public school teachers as chairman and poll clerk, and two members, one representing the ruling party and the other the dominant opposition party in the province and its component city or cities; highly urbanized city; and district of Metropolitan Manila.

SEC. 11. *Qualifications of members of the committee.* — No person shall be appointed or shall act as chairman, poll clerk or member of the committee or substitute therein, unless he is of good moral character and irreproachable reputation, a qualified voter of the city or municipality, has never been convicted of any election offense or of any other crime punishable by more than six months of imprisonment, or if he has pending against him an information for any election offense. He must be able to speak and write English or the local dialect.

SEC. 12. *Disqualification of members of the committee.* — No chairman, poll clerk or member of the committee shall be related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to any other member of the committee. In case of such disqualification, the member or members concerned shall inform the Commission thereof.

SEC. 13. *Appointment of the members of the committee.* — The members of the citizens election committee representing the ruling party and the dominant opposition party and their substitutes shall be appointed by the Commission on Elections not later than March 7, 1984 upon nomination by the respective political parties. For this purpose, the directorates of political parties shall submit in writing to the Commission the names of their representatives in each province and its component city or cities; highly urbanized city; and district of Metropolitan Manila who shall in turn submit likewise in writing not later than February 29, 1984 the names and addresses of the persons whom they propose to be appointed as representatives to the citizens election committee for each voting center in the province.

In constituencies where there are more than one opposition party and each of said parties submits its nomination and such nominations are in favor of different persons, the Commission shall require said parties to agree on the nomination of a common representative in the committee. Should they fail to come to an agreement, the Commission shall determine which among said parties is the dominant party, based on but not limited to the following guidelines:

1. Capability of the political party to wage a bona fide nationwide campaign as evidenced by the number of its members in the Batasang Pambansa and the number of its members elected to positions in the local governments, as well as by its party organization.
2. Bailiwicks or areas of political support.
3. Platform or program of government distinguishing the political party from the other political parties in ideology and orientation.
4. The record of the political party in the matter of its adherence to constitutional provisions on elections, including the duty and obligation of qualified citizens to register and to vote in elections.

If any of the parties entitled to representation in the committee fails to nominate its representative therein on or before February 29, 1984, the Commission shall appoint a public school teacher to fill the vacancy.

SEC. 14. *Question of Facts.* — Findings of the Commission on questions of facts shall be final.

SEC. 15. *Relief of members of the committee.* — Any member of the citizens elections committee as well as his substitute may at any time be relieved from office and substituted with another having the legal qualifications, upon petition of the authorized representatives of the party upon whose nomination the appointment was made, and it shall be unlawful to prevent said person from, or disturb him in, the performance of the duties of the said office. A record of each case of substitution shall be made, setting forth therein the hour in which the replaced member has ceased in office and the status of the work of the citizens election committee. Said record shall be signed by each member of the committee including the incoming and outgoing officers.

SEC. 16. *Temporary vacancies.* — If, at the time of the meeting of the committee, any member or the poll clerk is absent, or the office is still vacant, the member present shall call upon the substitute of the absent member to perform the duties of the latter; and, in case such substitute cannot be found, the member present upon nomination by the representative of the party of the absent member or in his

absence, by the watchers belonging to the party, shall appoint any qualified elector of the voting center to temporarily fill said vacancy until the absent member appears or the vacancy is filled. In case there are two members present, they shall act jointly.

SEC. 17. *Arrest of absent member.* — The member or members present may order the arrest of any member or poll clerk or substitute thereof who, in their judgment, has absented himself with intention of obstructing the performance of the duties of the committee.

SEC. 18. *Temporary designation of member and poll clerks by watchers.* — If at the time in which the committee must meet, all the offices of members and poll clerks are vacant, or if not one of them shall appear, the watchers present may designate qualified electors of the voting center to act in the place of the members and the poll clerks until the absentees shall appear or the vacancies are filled.

SEC. 19. *Oath of the members of the committee.* — The members and poll clerks, whether permanent, substitute or temporary, shall, before assuming their office, take and sign an oath upon forms prepared by the Commission before an officer authorized to administer oaths or, in his absence, before any other member of the committee, or in case no one is present, they shall take it before any elector. The oaths shall be sent immediately to the election registrar.

SEC. 20. *Compensation of the members of the committee.* — The chairman; poll clerks and members of the committee-shall each be entitled to a per diem of thirty pesos for each day of actual service rendered in the committee.

SEC. 21. *Duties of the committee.* — The committee shall have the following duties and functions:

- a. Undertake the registration of voters as authorized herein;
- b. Act as deputies of the Commission in the supervision and control of the registration in centers wherein they are assigned to assure that registration of qualified voters shall be done in a free, orderly and honest manner;
- c. Perform such other functions prescribed by this Decree or by the rules and regulations promulgated by the Commission.

SEC. 22. *Proceedings of the citizens election committee.* — The citizens election committee shall act through its chairman, by the vote of the majority of its members, but the poll clerk shall have no vote in its proceedings. The committee shall decide without delay all questions which may arise in the performance of its duties. During the meeting of the committee, not more than one member of the committee shall absent himself from the voting center at a time, and in no case shall such absence before more than twenty minutes.

SEC. 23. *Meeting to close the list of the voters before the election.* — The citizens election committee shall also meet on May 5, 1984 for the purpose of making such inclusions, exclusions, and corrections as may be or have been ordered by the courts, stating opposite every name so corrected, added, or cancelled the date of the order and the court which issued the same; and for the consecutive numbering of the voters of the voting center.

Should the committee fail to include in the list of voters any person ordered by competent court to be so included, said person shall, upon presentation of a

certified copy of the order of inclusion and upon proper identification be allowed by the committee to vote.

Should the committee fail to exclude from the list of voters any person ordered by the court to be so excluded, the committee shall not permit said person to vote upon presentation to it by any interested party of a certified copy of the order of exclusion.

SEC. 24. *Meeting hours of the committee.* — The meetings of the citizens election committee for the registration of voters shall commence at seven o'clock in the morning and shall continue until five o'clock in the afternoon. They may be suspended for one hour only at midday.

SEC. 25. *Voter's affidavit.* — Every person desiring to be registered in the list of voters shall, under oath taken before the citizens election committee, sign and affix the imprint of the thumbs of his right and left hands in quadruplicate, wherein he shall state: His name and surname; place of birth; age on his last birthday; civil status; profession, occupation or trade; residence, giving his correct and exact address; that he possesses the qualifications required of a voter; and that he is not in any way legally disqualified from voting. The citizens election committee shall require that the thumbmarks appear plainly printed.

SEC. 26. *Identification of voters.* — Any voter who is not known by the members of the committee may be identified by any voter of the voting center, or by the presentation of his birth or baptismal certificate or any other document showing his identity. No fees nor documentary stamps shall be required on such documents.

SEC. 27. *Action by the committee.* — Upon receipt of the voter's affidavit, the committee shall examine the date therein. If it finds that the applicant possesses all the qualifications and none of the disqualifications of a voter, he shall be registered. Otherwise, he shall not be registered.

The name and address of each registered voter shall, immediately upon his registration, be entered in the proper alphabetical group in the list.

SEC. 28. *Preservation of the voters' affidavits.* — A copy of the affidavit of each voter shall be kept by the citizens election committee until after the election, when it shall deliver it to the election registrar together with the copies of the list of voters and other election papers for use in the next election. The other two copies shall be sent by the committee on the day following the date of the affidavit to the office of the provincial election supervisor and the Commission on Elections in Manila. The latter shall file and preserve the voter's affidavits by city and municipality and in alphabetical order of their surnames. The fourth copy shall be given to the voter as evidence of his registration.

SEC. 29. *Columns in the list of voters.* — The list of voters shall be arranged in columns as follows: In the first column there shall be entered, at the time of the closing of the list before the election, a number opposite the name of each voter registered, beginning with number one and continuing in consecutive order until the end of the list. In the second column, the surnames generally used by such persons shall be written in alphabetical order followed by their respective first names, without abbreviations of any kind. In the third column, the respective residence of such person with the name of the street and number, or, in case there be none, a brief description of the locality or place shall be inserted. In the fourth column, there