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2 Republic of the Philippines
3 HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
4 Quezon City

5 EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS
6 Third Regular Session

7
8 HOUSE RESOLUTION No. 2554
9



10 Introduced by
11 BAYAN MUNA Representatives FERDINAND R. GAITE,
12 EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT and CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE

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14 RESOLUTION
15 URGING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THROUGH THE COMMITTEE
16 ON SUFFRAGE AND ELECTORAL REFORMS, TO CONDUCT AN
17 INVESTIGATION, IN AID OF LEGISLATION, ON THE CHAOTIC AND
18 DISORGANIZED ELECTION SYSTEM IN HONG KONG AND OTHER
19 COUNTRIES ON THE FIRST DAY OF OVERSEAS VOTING FOR THE 2022
20 NATIONAL ELECTIONS
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23 **WHEREAS**, the April 10, 2022, start of overseas voting for the 2022 national elections was
24 marred with confusion and met with concerns by overseas Filipino workers as its
25 implementation became disorganized. In Hong Kong, for instance, complaints were raised early
26 as thousands of voters were not accommodated on the first day of overseas voting. Other
27 concerns raised are the lack of vote-counting machines (VCM) as only five (5) were provided by
28 the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to the consular office instead of the usual ten (10) in
29 the previous elections;
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31 **WHEREAS**, according to Dolores Pelaez, a member of United Filipinos – Migrante Hong
32 Kong, qualified overseas voters had already lined up at the Bayanihan Center, the assigned voting
33 area when it was announced by Hong Kong Consul General Raly Tejada that only 3,000 voters
34 would be allowed to cast their vote. Only 3,285 OFWs were able to cast their vote. In previous
35 elections, at least 6,000 voters were able to cast their vote on one Sunday because there were ten
36 (10) VCMs provided. In Hong Kong, an estimated 93,000 overseas Filipinos are registered to
37 vote, the fourth-highest among all countries with overseas Filipino voters. Migrante International
38 estimates that with only four remaining Sundays which are their usual days off, including
39 weekdays, only 35,000 to 45,000 OFWs will be able to vote if no additional VCMs are provided;
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41 **WHEREAS**, the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong, in a statement, claimed the early
42 voting time cut-off was allegedly “one of the conditions set forth by the Hong Kong
43 Government in strict compliance with anti-pandemic measures given that Hong Kong is in the
44 midst of the Fifth Wave of the pandemic.” It then belatedly advised the voters to consider voting
45 on subsequent days until May 9, 2022, within the 30 days allowed for overseas voting;
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47 **WHEREAS**, there were also reports of alleged cases of pre-shaded ballots given to voters that
48 favor the candidacy of those identified with the Duterte administration, as well as cases of
49 partisan followers of candidates allowed entry in the voting areas;
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1 **WHEREAS**, Migrante International, a global alliance of grassroots organizations of overseas
2 Filipino workers, also reported concerns from overseas Filipino workers in different countries all
3 over the world on the first day of overseas voting. In Dubai the following concerns were raised:

- 4 1. Only the Dubai consulate was opened as the polling precinct;
- 5 2. Voters aired their grievances about the long queues and congested waiting areas due to
6 limited space. Most voters reportedly waited in line for 2-3 hours to vote, some even
7 waiting in line for as long as 5 hours;
- 8 3. Local police officials reprimanded voters because of the large crowd at the precinct;
- 9 4. Members of the Special Board of Election Inspectors also reportedly did not take any
10 action on individuals wearing campaign t-shirts of Bongbong Marcos and Sarah Duterte
11 despite complaints from poll watchers. There were also reports of Marcos-Duterte
12 supporters chanting in favor of the said tandem near the polling precinct;

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14 **WHEREAS**, in Saudi Arabia, Migrante International noted the following concerns:

- 15 1. No indelible ink was available after voting;
- 16 2. At least two ballots were not read and accepted by the machine due to unwanted marks
17 on the barcode at the side of the ballot;
- 18 3. The box where the receipts are placed is only a carton box;

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20 **WHEREAS**, Migrante International also raised concerns over the delayed release of guidelines
21 on the conduct of poll-watching activities. Groups were given only a day to register poll watch
22 participants. The deadline for the registration of poll watchers was set only a day after the release
23 of poll watch guidelines;

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25 **WHEREAS**, Migrante International further reported delays in overseas voting in different
26 countries. In Japan, on April 10, 2022, the first day of overseas voting, not one overseas Filipino
27 voter received their voting ballots. According to the Philippine Embassy, the ballots were yet to
28 be released by the customs office in Japan.

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30 **WHEREAS**, in Sydney, Australia ballots were only mailed out to voters on April 8, 2022;

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32 **WHEREAS**, in China, overseas voting at the Philippine Consulate General in Shanghai was
33 suspended due to the Covid-19 lockdown;

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35 **WHEREAS**, in the United States of America, in New York, voters have not yet received their
36 ballots in the mail. VCM testing was postponed twice and the announcement of actual VCM
37 testing and sealing was only announced to the public 1 to 4 days before the testing. The final
38 testing and sealing will only be conducted by Wednesday, April 13;

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40 **WHEREAS**, in France, the Philippine Embassy was closed and OFWs were not able to cast
41 their votes;

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43 **WHEREAS**, in Italy, the delivery and mailing of ballots to voters in Bologna and Milan were
44 delayed. Voters who went to their respective consulates were told that ballots had not yet
45 arrived;

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47 **WHEREAS**, due to logistical difficulties in the shipment of election materials, the COMELEC
48 also announced a delay in overseas voting in the following areas:

- 49 1. Philippine embassy in Wellington, New Zealand
- 50 2. Philippine embassy in Islamabad, Pakistan
- 51 3. Philippine embassy in Dili, Timor Leste

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2 **WHEREAS**, on April 12, 2022, due to public clamor by overseas voters, the COMELEC has
3 since provided additional VCMs and opened up additional precincts in Hong Kong. However,
4 the public needs to remain vigilant as other concerns raised by overseas voters have yet to be
5 addressed;

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7 **WHEREAS**, contingencies in the elections system could be anticipated and then implemented
8 to accommodate overseas voters despite the pandemic-related restrictions and the reported
9 capacity limit provided by host countries. The provision of additional VCMs could have
10 hastened the voting process and lessened the queues. Additional measures such as scheduling of
11 voters and extended voting hours could also be considered to accommodate the thousands of
12 overseas voters who wish to exercise their right to vote;

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14 **WHEREAS**, as representatives of the people, we must ensure that all registered Filipinos can
15 freely exercise their right to suffrage, especially overseas voters. Congress must guard against any
16 potential massive disenfranchisement of overseas voters due to the lack of proper organizing by
17 election officials;

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19 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the
20 House of Representatives, through the Committee on Suffrage and Electoral Reforms, conduct
21 an investigation, in aid of legislation, on the chaotic and disorganized election system in Hong
22 Kong and other territories and countries during the first day of overseas voting for the 2022
23 national elections.

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26 *Adopted,*

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REP. FERDINAND R. GAITE
Bayan Muna Partylist


REP. EUFEMIA C. CULLAMAT
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REP. CARLOS ISAGANI T. ZARATE
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