- ➢ Participate in local governance through development planning on the barangay level, consultations and public hearings, and representation in local special bodies, especially in the local development councils.

- ➢ Aside from direct exercise of legislative power through the system of initiative and referendum, citizen-voter can participate in legislation through legislative advocacy, a process of engaging with the legislature and other governmental and social institution to ensure that the concerns and welfare of the general electorate be articulated in the deliberations of bills and other legislative measures as well as in the final versions of laws.

- ➢ The citizen voter can also engage in the political and electoral process in other ways such as:
    A. running for office.
    B. supporting/campaigning for a political party, candidate, or party-list group.
    C. supporting initiatives of civil society organizations to ensure honest and peaceful elections, eg. Election monitoring
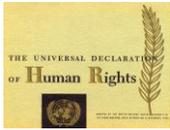   D. making views known to the elected representatives.

I. The Right to Suffrage

The human right to vote is embodied in three instruments: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the International Covenant on Civil and the Political Rights; and the 1987 Philippine Constitution. The Philippines is governed by these three documents which similarly mandate the **universality of the right**; **equality in access to public service**; and **secrecy of votes**.

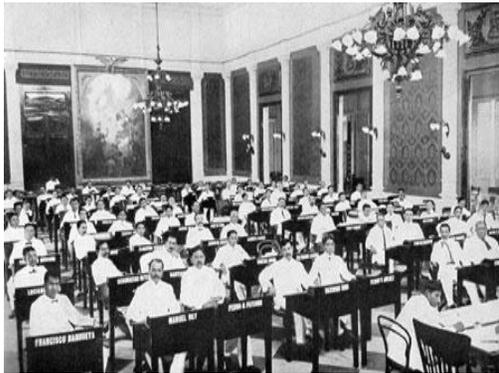| Article 21 (1-3) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (December 10, 1948)	Art.25 (a-c) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, (March 1976)	Art. V, Sec. 1-2 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution
1 Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. 2 Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. 3 The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of the government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.	Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions: (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives; (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors; (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country.	1 Suffrage may be exercised by all citizens of the Philippines not otherwise disqualified by law. 2 The Congress shall provide a system for securing the secrecy and sanctity of the ballot as well as a system for absentee voting by qualified Filipinos abroad. The congress shall also design a procedure for the disabled and the illiterates to vote without the assistance of other persons. Until then, they shall be allowed to vote under existing laws and such rules as the Commission on Elections may promulgate to protect the secrecy of the ballot.

Action Points for Citizen-Voters

8

History of Elections

2

Vision of Good Government, Leaders, and Citizen-Voter

7

CHANGE AHEAD

Aquino's program of restoring democracy, promoting stability, and establishing political legitimacy involved three major electoral exercises: a national plebiscite for the approval of the 1987 Constitution in February 1987; the election for members of the Senate and House of Representatives in May 1987; and local elections in January 1988. The 1987 Constitution provided for a multi-party system.

During the 1992 synchronized national and local elections, the people voted for president for the first time under the 1987 Constitution. The main campaign issue was doing away with "trapo" or traditional politics. In 1995, congressional and local elections were held. A new form of fraud dubbed as "dagdag-bawas" or the subtraction of votes from one candidate to be added to the contending candidate was a practice during these two major elections.

In 1998, the first party-list elections were held. Joseph Estrada was elected as President of the Republic with popular support. However in January 2001, Estrada stepped down as president due to cases of plunder. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was installed as president.

Four months later, senatorial and local elections were held simultaneously which proved to be a major victory for the new administration after its allies gained a majority in both Houses of Congress, along with winning most of the elected local posts.

However, President Arroyo had become so unpopular that, by 2004, she only narrowly won over her closest rival, actor-turned politician Fernando Poe, Jr. A year later, in June 2005, President Arroyo was confronted by the "Hello, Garci" controversy, wherein her alleged taped conversations with COMELEC Commissioner Garciliano with the intent of rigging the elections was leaked to the media. This generated large street demonstrations, reminiscent of EDSA I and II.

VI. Voter Behavior and Elections

- A 2003 IPER update study on voter behavior suggests the top four factors determining the vote of Filipino electorate:

    - candidate's public servant image;
    - political machinery;
    - candidate's popularity; and
    - endorsement of a traditional network and organizations which include the family, the church, the ward leaders, and formal groups and associations.

- According to the March 2004 Pulse Asia Survey, the youth do not differ from other age groups in their desired traits for a national leader (top traits were: pro-poor, is knowledgeable and has experience in management of government, trustworthy, can enforce the law equally for influential and ordinary people, prays often to God, godly, sincere, and fights anomalies in government).

- In March 2007, Pulse Asia conducted the same survey, with the following results as the most important characteristics that a national leader should posses: hard working, relates well to others, can give hope to most Filipinos, has integrity and a good reputation, produces good results, announces his/her stand on important issues and his/her proposed programs.

- Furthermore, it has been reported that about 79% to 90% of registered voters below 55 years old were aware of political ads in 2004 and with a slight increase to 88% to 94% in 2007.

- The conduct of elections is made complex by the practices and values, which in turn are reflective of the behavior and attitudes of the electorate and the politicians and of the actual practices before, during, and after elections. Further, voter behavior reflects the personalistic and patronage orientation of traditional Filipino politics or "trapo."

- Patronage politics thrive in a culture where the government leader becomes a politician who serves as a patron accommodating special favors to dole out money or provide jobs, recommendations, and contracts to only a few in exchange for votes in the succeeding elections or support for a political agenda.

    A common element of patronage culture is *utang na loob.* The powers-that-be use this to ensure that their political and economic interests will be served. For instance, a "powerful" politician may invite a candidate to run under his political party and in return, the candidate will feel indebted and - eventually feel pressured to support the political agenda of his benefactor (even if he is opposed to said agenda).

Elections and Democracy

3

The Constitution lays down specific criteria on who can become public servants.

During the 2010 elections, we voted for the 15th president of the Republic of the Philippines. At the same time, we voted for a new vice-president as well as 12 senators, a number of representatives and local government officials.

The President

The President is the head of the executive branch of the government. In order to run for the position, aspirants should be:

1. natural born citizen of the Philippines;
2. a registered voter;
3. able to read and write;
4. at least forty years of age on the day of the election and;
5. a resident of the Philippines for at least ten years immediately preceding election.

The Vice-President

In the event that the President is unable to perform his/her duties because of death or permanent disability, or should the president be impeached, the Vice-President shall take over the responsibility of running the exectuive department.

The Vice- President shall be elected and can be removed from office in the same manner as that of the President.

The Senate and the House of Representatives

Where no President and Vice President shall have been chosen or shall have qualified, or where both shall have died or become permanently disabled, the President of the Senate or, in case of his/her inability, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, shall act as President until a President or a Vice President shall have been chosen and qualified. y(1987 Philippine Constitution)

Those who wish to run for Senate should have the same qualifications as that of the President or Vice-President except that he/she need only be 35 years old and above. Those who intend to run for the lower house should at least be 25 years old and should possess the same qualifications as that of the President, et al.

Aside from the general qualifications required of the political candidates, voters must also consider looking into the candidates' track records.

Specific Electoral Mechanisms

- Since the enactment of the 1987 Constitution, elections for President and Vice-president are held every six years, while elections for Senators and members of the House of Representatives and local government officials occur every three years.

- At the local level, *barangay* elections and *Sangguniang Kabataan* elections are also held periodically.

- From 1993 onwards elections for the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) were held. The 1996 and the 2008 ARMM elections also served as a pilot-test for the automated system of elections.

- The party-list system of representation allows for marginalized and underrepresented sectors to be represented in the national legislature. The system serves as an attempt to depart from the personalistic character of the political and electoral system by giving focus to the party and its issue-based platform.

- The latest development in upholding the right of suffrage is constituted in Republic Act 9189, which provides for a system of absentee voting for qualified Filipinos abroad.

Aside from voting in elections, our Constitution mandates other mechanisms and venues to advance democratization and citizen's participation in governance:

- The system of **referendum,** which is consultative in nature, gives people the power to directly enact or reject laws both at the local and national levels.

- Meanwhile, through **plebiscite,** the people initiates to make a decision whether to approve or reject the call for a constitutional convention to propose changes to the Constitution, approve or reject proposed changes in the Constitution and, at both the local and national levels, express their will with respect to certain issues.

- A leader can be removed in office when the people are not satisfied with his/her performance. This can be done through **recall.**

- Also through **people's initiative**, the people may directly propose amendments to the Constitution by a petition of at least 12% of the total number of registered voters, in which 3% of registered voters in each legislative district is represented.

Powers and Functions of Public Servants
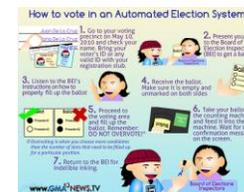
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Election Process and Beyond

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The voting period is from 7:00 am until 6:00 pm. Before voting starts, BEI shows the empty ballot box, turns on/ initializes PCOS machine, and prints Initialization Report or "Zero Report" to show that there is no entry/vote in the machine's memory.

Casting of Votes

The casting of votes shall proceed in the following manner:

❖ The voter looks for his/her name in the list of voters posted outside the polling place.
❖ The voter presents an ID to the BEI in assigned clustered precinct.
❖ Upon verifying the voter's identity, BEI gives voter a ballot containing the list of candidates for various vacant elective positions.
❖ The voter shades, the entire oval (◯) corresponding   tto her/his choice of candidate, using a special marker.
❖ Voter personally feeds the accomplished ballot into the PCOS Machine. The ballot will go straight to a translucent ballot box. The machine will store the data and take a photo of the ballot.
❖ The BEI member marks voter's finger with indelible ink.

Counting, Canvassing, and Transmittal of Votes

After voting ends at 6:00pm, the voter continues to be vigilant in the counting, canvassing, and transmittal and canvassing of votes.

❖ The BEI executes a closing function on the machine to prevent it from accepting additional ballots/votes. The machine automatically starts automated counting of the votes and prints eight (8) copies of the Election Returns (ERs).
❖ The BEI distributes the initially printed ERs. One copy is posted outside the precinct for public viewing.
❖ The BEI attaches transmission cable/modem to the machine.
❖ The BEI performs transmission function which starts transmittal of data to the (a) Municipal Board of Canvassers (MBC); (b) COMELEC central database; and (c) data server of accredited groups including the Kapisanan ng mga Broadcasters sa Pilipinas (KBP), political parties, and citizens' arm thru the machine. After the transmission, BEI performs a function for the machine to print the remaining twenty-two (22) copies of the ERs for other accredited parties.

Features of the System

The Election Automation Law provides for the following features of the automated system: a) **use of appropriate ballot**s; b) **stand-alone machine which will count and consolidate elections results**; c) **provision for audit trails**; d) **minimum human intervention**; and e) **adequate safeguard and security measures**.

Official Ballot
The official ballot consists of an oval shaped paper ballot corresponding to the pre-printed names of candidates. The ballot accommodates 300 names of candidates, with 150 names per side of the ballot. To prevent tampering and use of fake ballots, the ballot has a watermark and ultraviolet (UV) features, and one barcode which corresponds to each ballot. A designated color will correspond to the different elective positions. A marking pen will be provided by the BEI during Election Day.

The voter personally feeds the ballot into the machine at any orientation. The machine scans both sides of the ballot simultaneously and generates and stores a digital image.

Stand-Alone Machine
Throughout the voting process until the printing of the initial eight (8) copies of election returns, the PCOS machine is not connected to any transmission cable or modem. Only after the printing of initial ERs will the BEI connect the links for transmission to eliminate doubts that the PCOS can be manipulated remotely.

Audit Trail
The machine generates an audit log which documents and reports the activities processed by the machine at a particular date and time. A random manual audit will be conducted in randomly-selected precincts chosen by the Commission thru a composite committee with representation from a citizen's arm.

Minimum human intervention
The voter personally feeds the ballot into the machine, while only the BEI members operate the PCOS. Transmission is done electronically, with sufficient system back-up.

Preliminary to the voting exercise is the registration of voters. The registration process is guided by RA 8189 or the Continuing Voters' Registration Act of 1996 and by COMELEC Resolution No. 8514 rules and regulations on the Continuing Registration of Voters.

During the **registration** process, qualified applicant will have to appear personally at the local COMELEC office.

Security Measures

Aside from the previously mentioned safeguards, the automated election system has the following security measures:

* ❖ Use of password and personal identification number (PIN)
* ❖ Digital signatures of BEI Members
* ❖ Encryption, the same security system used by banks (i.e., 128-bit encryption, random encryption, no single/master decryption code)
* ❖ Less-than-2-minute transmission speed
* ❖ Multiple data source (i.e., paper ballot, digital ballot image, scanned data)
* ❖ Hard copies for distribution
    * o 30 copies of election returns at the precinct level
    * o 30 copies of certificate of canvass at municipal level
    * o 14 copies of certificate of canvass at provincial level
* ❖ Audit Log
* ❖ Data storage device
* ❖ Transmitted data (i.e., results, reports)
* ❖ Activity reports (i.e., Initialization/Zero Report, Transmission Reports, Audit Log)
* ❖ Series of systems tests (i.e., mock election, testing and sealing, 2 areas etc.)
* ❖ Back up batteries (16 hours capacity)
* ❖ Back up PCOS units

The PCOS – Precinct Count Optical Scan used in the first Philippine Automated National and Local Elections in 2010

Pre-Election Phase

Registration

The applicant's identity and residence will be verified thru presentation of a valid ID with photograph and signature. The applicant's status of registration will also be verified. After a successful verification, the applicant shall receive and fill out an application form in three (3) copies.

The applicant's **biometrics** will then be digitally captured, i.e., digital images of a voter's **photograph**, **fingerprints,** and **signature** will be taken using COMELEC's **Data Capture Machine** (DCM). An Acknowledgment Receipt will be given to the applicant afterwards.