



Your Vote. Our Future.

A Primer on Citizen Participation in Election

This primer serves to contribute to the efforts at effecting matured and informed political attitudes and decisions of Filipino citizen-voters. As a core citizen-voter education materials, it covers the broader aspects of the political and electoral system, human rights, and governance.

Prepared by the Institute for Political and Electoral Reform (IPER)
With the Support of Consortium on Electoral Reforms (CER)
and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Adopted by the 2003 National Voters' Education Summit.



CER



C. E. Form No. 6

OFFICIAL BALLOT



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May 10, 2004

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY

Fill out this ballot secretly inside the booth. Do not put any distinctive mark on any part of this ballot.

PRESIDENT _____

VICE-PRESIDENT _____

SENATORS

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

11. _____

12. _____

PARTY LIST

Select one from among the Political Parties, Sectoral Parties (Labor, Peasant, Urban Poor, Indigenous Cultural Communities, Women, Veterans, Elderly, Disabled, Fishermen), Overseas Workers, Youth or Professionals, Organizations or Coalitions enumerated in the certified list posted on the voting booth.

CONGRESSMAN
REPRESENTATIVE _____

GOVERNOR _____

VICE-GOVERNOR _____

MEMBERS SANGGUNIANG PANLALAWIGAN
PROVINCIAL BOARD

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

CITY MAYOR _____

CITY VICE-MAYOR _____

MEMBERS SANGGUNIANG PANLUNOD
CITY COUNCIL

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

Voter's
Right Thumbmark



No. 1234567.



What is the Right of Suffrage?

Suffrage is the human right to vote and, for the Philippines, is indicated in three documents: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR); the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the 1987 Philippine Constitution. They all call for **universality of the right; equality in access to public service; and secrecy of votes.**

This right is exercised during elections, and as a citizen-voter, you are entitled to free and informed choice on whom to vote. Every political choices and decisions you make will determine the kind of government that will serve the country.

How is suffrage a mechanism for political participation?

The Constitution guarantees that we are a sovereign people, where *all* government authority comes from. Sovereignty or the power to govern is exercised directly through suffrage and indirectly through public officials elected by the people. The will of the people, then, is best expressed in clean, orderly and honest elections.

Who are qualified to vote in Philippine elections?

- citizens of the Philippines
- 18 old years old and above on the day of elections
- a resident of the Philippines for one year and in the city or municipality wherein he proposes to vote for at least six months before the election
- those not disqualified by law

under the Overseas Absentee Voting Law:

- Filipino citizens abroad
- immigrants
- permanent residents with affidavit of intent to resume residence in the Philippines

Who are disqualified to vote in Philippine elections?

The following are disqualified (by law) from voting:

- person sentenced to be imprisoned for not less than one year
- person found to have committed rebellion, sedition, violation of the anti-subversion and firearms laws, or any crime against national security or involving disloyalty to the government
- insane or incompetent persons

Elections in the Philippines

Pre-Martial Rule

The Philippines was under a two-party system, with Nacionalista and Liberal as the two major political parties

Martial Law period

1978 election for the Interim Batasang Pambansa. *Kilusang Bagong Lipunan (KBL)* became the administration party. The election was claimed to be towards restoration of old political order but Marcos' purpose was to gain legitimacy for his unpopular administration and to create a rubber stamp legislature. The exercise defied democratic procedures, and was characterized by rampant electoral manipulation done by the Marcos government to ensure victory.



1960

1970

1980

1972

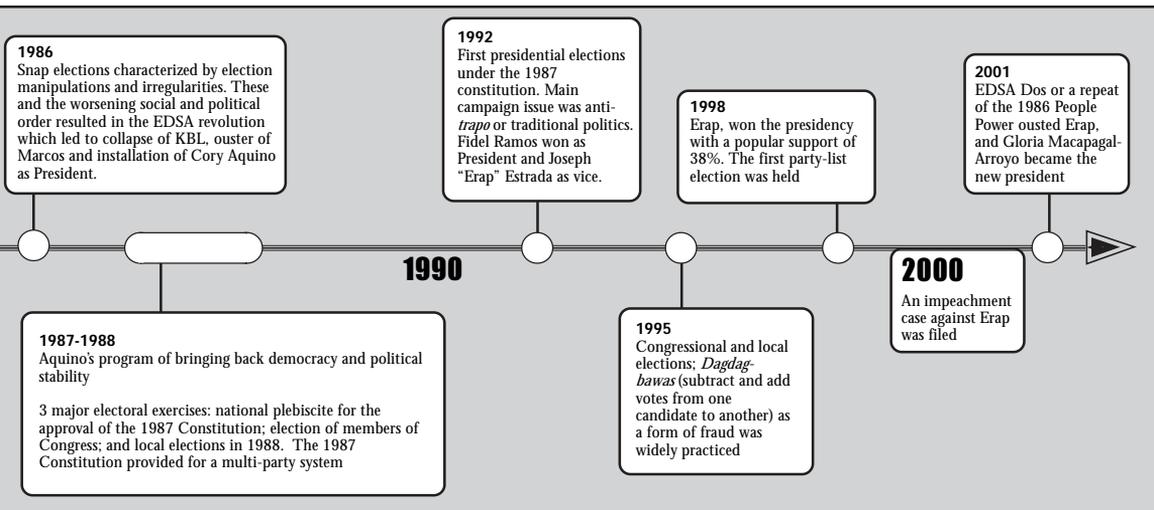
Ferdinand Marcos declared Martial Law. The 1935 Constitution was scrapped, an Interim Batasang Pambansa was created and a new (1973) Constitution was adopted

1983

Assassination of Ninoy Aquino

What are the powers and functions of the national and local officials whom we vote for?

	Executive	Legislative
National Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President (Vice President) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 12 Senators 1 District Representative or Congressman/woman (1 Party-list group)
Provincial Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vice Governor-Sangguniang Panlalawigan Members
Municipal/City Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City/Municipal Mayor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City/Municipal Vice-Mayor Members of the Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Councilors) / Sangguniang Bayan (Municipal Councilors)
Barangay Level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Punong Barangay (PB) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PB Members of the sangguniang barangay (barangay kagawad and sangguniang kabataan chair)
Powers and Functions	<p>Control of all executive departments and all implementing agencies of the government</p> <p>Appointment of high officials in the government (heads of executive departments/cabinet members, ambassadors, public ministers, consuls, officers of the armed forces)</p> <p>Seeing to the execution and implementation of laws and policies</p>	<p>Statute making, constitution making, and amending of constitution</p> <p>Appropriations/financial function</p> <p>Oversight function</p> <p>Informational or the power to conduct inquiries in aid of legislation.</p>



How do the legislative and executive interact in the law-making process?

In the legislative process, the president can either approve or veto a law passed by Congress. It would require 2/3s vote by the legislative body to finally pass the vetoed version into law.

At the local level, chief executives can also veto any ordinance on the ground that it is prejudicial to the public. In turn, the *sanggunian* or the local legislative body can override the veto, also by 2/3s vote of the whole *sanggunian*.

How do Filipino voters vote?

A 2003 update study on voting behavior looks at how Filipino voters choose their candidates:

Public servant image or the candidate's characteristics such as *madaling lapitan*, *malinis na pagkatao*, *matulungin sa nangangailangan*, *nagtataguyod ng programang pangkaunlaran*.

Political machinery which includes the political party, being in the opposition, and good campaign strategies

Popularity or being a celebrity or endorsed by a celebrity

Endorsement of network and organizations such as the family, the church, the groups and group leaders.

What election practices and irregularities should the citizens watch out for?

Bribery, intimidation, and various forms of cheating, particularly:

Registering in several names and/or several precincts;
Vote-buying/vote-selling/paid not to vote;

Flying voters;

Voting in the name of other persons/ dead persons or relatives;

Threat to supporters, voters, and members of election inspectors;

Lanzadera/ ballot-switching and ballot box-snatching;

Marking ballots and other election documents to make it invalid;

Dagdag-bawas during counting and canvassing

Election Process

1. Registration Day

2. Revision Day

9. Proclamation
of winning
candidates



3. List of Voters

4. Casting
of Votes

5. Counting
of Votes

8a. Board of Canvassers
(For President and Vice-President)

6. Preparation of
Election Returns
and other Reports

8b. Board of Canvassers
(For Senators)

7. Distribution of
Election Returns

8c. Board of Canvassers
(Prov'l/City/District/Municipality)

What are the efforts to modernize election process in the Philippines?

Republic Act 8436 or the Election Modernization Act of 1997 calls for the use of *automated election system* in the country as early as the May 1998 elections. This system will make use of appropriate technology for voting and electronic devices to count and canvass votes.

However, we have yet to see the full implementation of a nationwide automated election system after three years or more.

Implementation of RA 8436 through Comelec Resolution 02-0170 (Phases of Modernization)

Phase I

Voter Registration and
Validation System



Phase II

Automated Counting and
Canvassing System



Phase III

Electronic Transmission
of Election Results



Aside from voting in elections, how can I, as a citizen-voter, participate in political affairs?

Initiative and Referendum

Through the system of initiative and referendum, the people can directly propose, enact, and reject laws at the local level.

Also through initiative, citizens may directly propose amendments to the Constitution by a petition of at least 12% of the total number of registered voters, where 3% of registered voters in each legislative district is represented.

Plebiscite

Through plebiscites, the people 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 the local level, express their will on certain local issues.

Sectoral Representation

The party-list system of representation gives sectors the chance to be represented in Congress together with our Congressmen/women. Under this system, voters support a sectoral party or organization or coalition and its issues and programs.

The Constitution and the 1991 Local Government Code (LGC) allow for representation of sectors in the local legislature or *sanggunian*.

Local Special Bodies

Ordinary citizens are called to sit in local special bodies such as the local health boards, school boards, peace and order councils and development councils for consultation.

A *barangay* assembly (*assembly of all residents, 15 years old and above, of the barangay*) meets to discuss the activities and finances of the *Sangguniang Barangay* and matters affecting the *barangay*.

The assembly has the power to hear and judge the report of Sangguniang Barangay's (SB) performance. It can also recommend matters for legislation by SB and decide on the adoption of initiative to propose, enact or reject ordinances.

Absentee Voting System

Republic Act 9189 of The Overseas Absentee Voting Law provides for a system, which allows qualified Filipinos abroad to vote in national elections in the Philippines.

What makes a good government, good leaders and good citizen-voters?

- 👍 **A good government** is one that engages citizen participation and is responsive to the needs of the people.
- 👍 **Good leaders** are those who uphold accountability to the people and promote transparent and people-oriented programs.
- 👍 **Good citizen-voters** are those who value their right of suffrage as to keep themselves informed, involved and vigilant.

What are some action points for citizen-voters in exercising the Right of Suffrage?

Before elections <<

Prepare to exercise the right of suffrage and the right to an informed and free choice.

-  Register during the period allotted for voter registration
-  Be informed of the issues, platforms and personalities of the political candidates
-  Set specific guidelines in choosing government leaders in terms of the candidates' social affiliations and interests, competence, lifestyle, performance records.
-  Conduct/participate in public debates that would inform citizens and gain the commitment of the candidates to integrate, foremost, the interests and welfare of the citizens in their program of government. This process can be used to remind and hold the elected leaders accountable to the promises made during the campaign.

During elections

Exercise vigilance and the right to vote

-  Vote according to your conscience
-  Protect the integrity of your own vote from any undue influence
-  Volunteer in organizations that work for clean and peaceful elections
-  Watch out for instances of cheating in the elections and inform authorities and the rest of the electorate of such activities.

Post-Elections >>

Practice continued vigilance and participate in governance

-  Be vigilant in the counting and canvassing of votes
-  Attend consultations and public hearings, and participate in local special bodies.
-  Legislative advocacy- a process where citizens talk with the lawmakers and other implementers in the government to ensure that the concerns and welfare of the general public are included in the discussion and making of laws.
-  The citizen voter can also engage in the political and electoral process in other ways such as:
 - a.making views known to the elected representatives.
 - 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.
 - d.running for office.