

AUTHORIZING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO REORGANIZE ITS DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES, DIVISIONS, SECTIONS OR UNITS, FIX THE SALARIES OF ITS OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES AND PROVIDE APPROPR...

PRESIDENTIAL DECREE NO. 597, December 03, 1974

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WHEREAS, with the increased membership and the expanded functions and powers of the Commission on Elections under the new Constitution, there is need to authorize said agency to undertake a reorganization of its various departments, divisions, sections, offices and other units;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections, by specific provision of Republic Act No. 5435, was not included in the reorganization of the government under the Integrated Reorganization Plan;

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections was last reorganized in 1963 by virtue of Republic Act No. 3808, and that since then no substantial changes have been made in the staffing pattern, administrative structure and organizational machinery of the said agency;

WHEREAS, Presidential Decree No. 203 transferred to the Commission on Elections the personnel, appropriations and properties of the various Electoral Tribunals, and for this reason there is need to empower the Commission on Elections to deploy through reorganization the Tribunal employees in appropriate departments, divisions, sections, offices or units where their services can be most useful;

WHEREAS, under the Transitory Provisions of the new Constitution, it is provided that priority shall be given, inter alia, to the reorganization of the Government; and the reorganization of the Commission on Elections would be a step in compliance with this provision of the new Charter;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, FERDINAND E. MARCOS, President of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution as Commander-in-Chief of all the Armed Forces of the Philippines and pursuant to Proclamation No. 1081 dated September 21, 1972, and General Order No. 1 dated September 22, 1972, as amended, do hereby order and decree:

SECTION 1. To promote maximum efficiency in carrying out its constitutional functions and powers and such other duties that may be entrusted to it by law, the Commission on Elections hereinafter referred to as the Commission is hereby authorized, within six months from the date of approval hereof, to reorganize all its departments, divisions, sections, offices or units.

SEC. 2. Any provision of existing law to the contrary notwithstanding and in order to accomplish the objectives set forth in Section One of this Decree, the Commission is authorized:

- To group, coordinate, consolidate or integrate departments, divisions, sections, offices or units according to functions;
- To abolish departments, divisions, sections, offices or units which may not be necessary, or create those which

are necessary, for the efficient conduct of its functions, services and activities;

- To eliminate overlapping and duplication of services, functions and activities;
- To transfer functions and personnel from one department, division, section, office or unit to another;
- To create, classify, combine, split and abolish positions;
- To fix and standardize salaries, materials and equipment;
- To provide whatever is necessary and desirable to effect economy and promote efficiency in the service.

SEC. 3. Whenever it becomes necessary to reduce the personnel of any department, division, section, office or unit, the provisions on reduction in force of Rule VIII of the Civil Service Rules shall be applied: Provided, however, That, other things being equal, the preference in retention shall be given to a veteran-employee.

Officers and employees whose positions are abolished or who may be separated from the service as a consequence of the reorganization authorized under this Decree shall not lose their civil service eligibilities. Their names shall be submitted to the Commissioner of Civil Service who shall enter them in a preferential re-employment list under proper classifications as to qualifications, training, civil service eligibility and other similar factor that would facilitate their re-employment in appropriate vacancies in the government: Provided, however, That, the names of officers and employees whose efficiency ratings are below "Satisfactory" or its equivalent, shall not be registered in the preferential re-employment list: Provided, further, That those who may be separated or removed from the service by reason of the reorganization shall be granted subject to existing rules a gratuity at a rate equivalent to one month's salary for every year of continuous satisfactory service rendered or the equivalent nearest fractions thereof favorable to them on the basis of the highest salary received: Provided, still further, That if they are already entitled to any gratuity or pension under any other existing retirement or gratuity law, they shall have the option to select either such gratuity or pension or the gratuity provided under this Reorganization Decree.

SEC. 4. The Commission is hereby authorized to avail of the services of any government expert, office or agency or such reputable private consultant or management firms or entities as it may deem necessary to carry out the reorganization provided in this decree.

SEC. 5. The Commission is hereby authorized to use such sums as are necessary to carry out the provisions of this Decree from unexpended balance of its continuing appropriations and excess certifications to accounts payable. Henceforth, appropriations to cover the salaries of officials and employees of the Commission on Elections, and its maintenance and operating expenses as fixed in accordance with the provisions of this Decree shall be carried in the annual General Appropriation Acts.

SEC. 6. All laws, or parts thereof which are or may be in conflict with the provisions of this Decree are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

Done in the City of Manila, this 3rd day of December in the year of Our Lord, nineteen hundred and seventy-four.

(Sgd.)

FERDINAND E. MARCOS

President of the Philippines

By the President:

(Sgd.)

ALEJANDRO MELCHOR

Executive Secretary

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