

JOINT RESOLUTION ANNULLING THE BOOK OF VOTERS OF THE MUNICIPALITIES/CITIES IN THE AUTONOMOUS REGION OF MUSLIM MINDANAO, DIRECTING THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS TO IMMEDIATELY COND...

JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3, June 11, 2012

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Begun and held in Metro Manila, on Monday, the twenty-fifth day of July, two thousand eleven

WHEREAS, the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) is mandated by law to ensure a free, orderly and honest elections (BP 881, or Omnibus Election Code, Section 52 in relation to Article IX-C, Section 2, par. 1, Philippine Constitution);

WHEREAS, Section 39 of Republic Act No. 8189 provides for annulment of "any book of voters not prepared in accordance with the provisions of this Act or was prepared through fraud, bribery, forgery, impersonation, intimidation, force, or any other similar irregularity or which contains data that are statistically improbable";

WHEREAS, to carry out its mandate of ensuring an honest and credible election, the COMELEC has to initiate reform moves starting with the purging of the Book of Voters of illegal and fictitious voters;

WHEREAS, data from the National Statistics Office (NSO) indicate bloated population figures in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) that would suggest that the voters' lists in the region were padded, for instance: (1) while the population in the ARMM was 4.1 million in 2007, a revalidation by NSO in 2010 revealed only a little more than 3.3 million population; and (2) while the country's population, excluding ARMM, grew by just 1.89 percent between 2000 and 2007, ARMM reported a population growth rate of 5.46 percent, with Maguindanao at 6.6 percent and Basilan at 6.44 percent;

WHEREAS, the COMELEC has admitted publicly the presence of hundreds of thousands of illegal and fictitious registrants in the ARMM which need to be deleted from the Book of Voters;

WHEREAS, the electoral history of the ARMM shows that election results in these areas are always questionable and tainted with anomaly and irregularity, principally because of the padded Book of Voters;

WHEREAS, the practice of padding the Book of Voters has been resorted to by unscrupulous political leaders to perpetuate themselves in power and gives them a sense of invincibility to commit unbridled abuses and anomalies;

WHEREAS, the anomaly in the ARMM has national ramification because these "ghosts", fictitious and double (some are triple) registrants constitute the so-called "command votes" or "controlled votes" wielded by political warlords that could decide the winner not only in local but most importantly the national elections;

WHEREAS, Congress has recently enacted Republic Act No. 10153 which synchronizes the ARMM election with the national election as a major step towards electoral reform in the ARMM and this Resolution will supplement and complement said law;

WHEREAS, the Executive Department, the COMELEC, the ARMM Regional Governor and all stakeholders have expressed support to the need for the new general registration of voters in the ARMM: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, as it is hereby resolved by the Senate and the House of Representatives in Congress assembled, To annul the Book of Voters of the municipalities/cities in the ARMM and to direct the COMELEC to immediately conduct a new general registration of voters in the said Region.

Resolved, further, That to enable the COMELEC to field sufficient personnel to effect the new general registration of voters in the ARMM, the registration of voters in non-ARMM areas to be designated by the COMELEC is hereby suspended for the whole month of July 2012, and the personnel and necessary equipment from these areas shall be deployed in the ARMM for the registration.

Resolved, furthermore, That due to its urgency and only for the purpose of acquiring the necessary equipment and other registration paraphernalia to be used in the new general registration of voters in the ARMM, the COMELEC shall be authorized to resort to direct contracting or other alternative methods of procurement under Republic Act No. 9184.

Resolved, finally, That the amount necessary to carry out the new general registration in the ARMM shall be charged against the savings of the COMELEC including, but not limited to, the savings realized from the postponement of the 2011 ARMM elections; and any additional funding requirement shall be charged against the contingent fund authorized under Republic Act No. 10155 or the 2012 General Appropriations Act.

Approved: 11 June 2012.

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