



Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS**  
First Regular Session

**HOUSE BILL NO. 775**



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**Introduced By Representative Ma. Victoria Co-Pilar**

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#### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

The right to vote and be voted for is a fundamental democratic principle enshrined in the 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, particularly under Article V, which guarantees the sanctity of suffrage, and Article IX-C, Section 2(1), which mandates the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) to enforce and administer all laws related to the conduct of elections.

Section 77 of Batas Pambansa Blg. 881, otherwise known as the Omnibus Election Code of the Philippines, currently allows substitution of official candidates of a political party in case of death, disqualification, or voluntary withdrawal, provided certain conditions are met.

While this provision was originally crafted to ensure continuity of representation and uphold the rights of political parties in unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances, the current practice has unfortunately given rise to a troubling political tactic: the strategic use of candidate substitution through withdrawal. In recent elections in the country, both in midterm and presidential, placeholder candidates have been filed only to later withdraw in favor of a more popular or viable substitute, or commonly dubbed as “winnable,” which circumvents the spirit of fair and transparent electoral contests.

By limiting the grounds for substitution to truly exceptional and involuntary circumstances, this measure strengthens the integrity of our electoral system, discourages opportunistic political behavior, and affirms the constitutional mandate for honest, orderly, and credible elections.

In view of the foregoing, the immediate passage of this bill is earnestly sought.



1           PHYSICIAN, RENDERING THE CANDIDATE UNABLE TO  
2           PERFORM THE ELECTED POSITION'S DUTIES, AND WHICH  
3           APPEARS REASONABLY CERTAIN TO CONTINUE WITHOUT  
4           SUBSTANTIAL IMPROVEMENT UNTIL THE TERM OF OFFICE  
5           WHICH THE CANDIDATE SEEKS TO BE ELECTED FOR.”  
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7           **SEC. 2. Implementing Rules and Regulations.** - Within thirty (30) days from the  
8           effectivity of this Act, the Commission on Elections shall, upon consultation with relevant  
9           stakeholders, issue the rules and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.  
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11           **SEC. 3. Separability Clause.** - If any provision or part of this Act is declared  
12           unconstitutional or invalid, the remaining parts or provisions not affected shall remain  
13           in full force and effect.  
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15           **SEC. 4. Repealing Clause.** - All laws, presidential decrees, executive orders, rules  
16           and regulations, other issuances and parts thereof which are inconsistent with the  
17           provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.  
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19           **SEC. 5. Effectivity Clause.** - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
20           publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.  
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22           **Approved,**