

## **JGL Eye**

By Joseph G. Lariosa

CHICAGO, Illinois (JGLi) – Voting is one of most visible faces of democracy. But this is also one of the civil rights that is most overlooked and most people take for granted.

In a democracy, it is a given that if you vote, you can be voted upon.

But in reality, a voter cannot just run for any office although, he can vote. He has to meet some other requirements, like age or residency, before he can be voted upon.

Voting is just like betting in a lottery. If someone places a bet, he has a chance to win. But he is not assured of winning. And so when a case is filed

in court. Anybody can file a lawsuit. But there is no assurance of winning the lawsuit.

But in the case of the presidency of the United States, there is an additional wall that needs to be climbed – the Constitutional prerequisite that the candidate has to be a “natural-born U.S. citizen.”

This situation has prompted the U.S. Congress to entertain a resolution in 2000 that would introduce a Constitutional amendment that would allow a naturalized U.S. citizen to run for the presidency after holding that status for at least 20 years. Another proposal was to raise further up the requirement by backdating the age of naturalization to two-years old.

Of course, both proposals were rejected, and the “U.S. natural-born” requirement still stands.

## **BLOCKING FOREIGN INFLUENCE**

Proponents of the status quo are trying to keep the next Commander-in-Chief of the United States from “getting foreign influence” when he makes both domestic and foreign policy decisions.

Unlike in U.S. Congress, where a candidate is only one of the 435 congressmen or one of the 100 senators, or in the U.S. Supreme Court, where a candidate is only one of the nine associate justices, proponents of the status quo added the President is the one and only member of the executive branch, whose concentration of power is very hard to check.

But the proponents of the amendment complain that the millions of voters, who are naturalized U.S. citizens, are being disenfranchised from running for the presidency, and are, therefore, being reduced to “second class” citizens in America as the “natural-born clause is unjust and discriminatory.” They said this is a mockery of the “equal rights” principle.

This is exactly what’s happening with the Overseas dual-citizen Filipinos, who embraced foreign citizenships.

They are allowed to vote in Philippine elections but they could not run in any political office in the Philippines.

Obviously, the reason dual citizens are being barred from running for office is the same reason naturalized U.S. citizens cannot run for the presidency of the United States – the matter of loyalty or fear of foreign influence.

Why can't the Philippine Congress enter into compromise with dual-citizen Filipinos?

**RUN DUALS RUN**

Why can't they let the Filipino dual citizens run for any elective position, including the presidency, in the Philippine elections?

After all, some countries, like Mexico, are allowing dual citizens to run for elective positions in their native lands.

Why perpetuate the status of Overseas dual-citizen Filipinos as "second class" citizens in their native land by allowing them to vote but not to be voted upon?

Where is the spirit of the Constitutional Preamble that guarantees the people the right to enjoy "democracy under the rule of law and a regime of truth, justice, freedom, love, equality and peace"?

Under the Overseas Absentee Voting Act of 2003, Overseas Filipinos, including dual citizens, can vote only for the President, Vice President, 12 senators and one party-list group.

But dual citizens cannot go home to the Philippines and run for any elective position, without renouncing their foreign citizenships.

Why should dual citizens even give up their foreign citizenships, when the fear that foreign citizenship can influence their domestic decisions is just a myth?

## **MANY FRIVALDOS OVERSEAS**

Why question this sentiment long settled by the Philippine Supreme Court when it upheld the election of the late Juan G. Frivaldo as Sorsogon governor?

In supporting the gubernatorial seat of Mr. Frivaldo, the Supreme Court in its majority decision did not question the loyalty of Frivaldo to his native land, the Philippines, when it ruled in 1996 that, “(c)oncededly, he (Frivaldo) sought American citizenship only to escape the clutches of the dictatorship. At this stage, we cannot seriously entertain any doubt about his loyalty and dedication to this country. At the first opportunity, he returned to this land, and sought to serve his people once more.”

Is it possible that when Jesus Christ said, “you cannot be a prophet to your homeland,” He could be referring to the Overseas Filipinos as the returning prophets?

I am sure there are hundreds, if not thousands of Frivaldos overseas, who would like to continue with their public service when they are due to retire in the land of their births. Why deny them this birthright?

Are members of the Philippine Congress ever wondering why Overseas Filipinos are not warming up to register to vote in Philippine elections?

## Dual Citizens Treated Second-class Citizens - MabuhayRadio

Written by Joseph G. Lariosa

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And are they not thinking that overseas Filipinos might get tired of remitting their hard earned dollars back to their homeland if the OFWs continue to get a “second class” treatment?

That I will not wonder. ( [lariosa\\_jos@sbcglobal.net](mailto:lariosa_jos@sbcglobal.net) ) # # # [Joomla SEO](#)  
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