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# Fil-Ams urged to get the vote out

By [Nimfa U. Rueda](#)[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#)

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In the final hours of a four-state campaign day, President Barack Obama is joined by former President Bill Clinton, left, and Democratic candidate for the US Senate from Virginia, former Gov. Tim Kaine, at a rally at Jiffy Lube Live arena, late Saturday night in Bristow, Virginia. AP PHOTO

LOS ANGELES, California – With just three more days to go until the Nov. 6 elections, Melissa Ramoso leads an army of volunteers who are making phone calls, e-mailing, texting and knocking on doors to encourage Filipino Americans to vote.

“The Filipino American vote can make the difference in this tight race,” said Ramoso, co-chair of Kaya:Filipino Americans for Progress, Los Angeles Chapter, who attended a rally here Saturday (Sunday in Manila) urging Asian Americans to head to the polls.

Ramoso said that for the past few weeks they have targeted voters in Nevada, one of the crucial battleground states where Filipino Americans comprise the largest Asian group. Last week, their door-to-door canvassing reached 1,400 households, said Ramoso, whose group is campaigning for President Obama and several Filipino American democratic candidates running for national, state and local posts.

The “Get Out the Vote” rally, held at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center

Plaza in Los Angeles, was sponsored by more than a dozen organizations, including the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Mobilize the Immigrant Vote Action Fund and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (Apala).

Rozita Lee, a community organizer in Nevada and a member of the non-partisan Apala, said they expect a surge of new Fil Am voters – a result of months of voter registration campaign.

“We got more than 1,000 (new voters) within the past two months in Las Vegas alone,” Lee said. She said their volunteers continue to call, text and e-mail Filipinos and other Asian Americans on their database reminding them to vote on Nov. 6.

“We understand that this election cycle can really be down to a matter of a small margin,” said Genevieve Jopanda, national co-chair of Kaya. “That’s why as a national volunteer organization we specifically focused on Nevada and Virginia, battleground states that have the fastest growing Filipino population.”

According to the National Asian American Survey (Naas), 52 percent of Filipino Americans are likely to vote in 2012 – considered one of the highest among Asian Americans.

The Filipino American community represents a significant voting population. According to the 2010 Census, Filipinos number more than 3.4 million with the largest share being in California and fastest growth shown in Nevada. Filipinos are the second largest Asian American group after Chinese Americans.

“We need to make sure that our rapid population growth translates into increased electoral participation,” said Jopanda. “Voter turnout is the only way to ensure that the right leaders who make decisions about our livelihood, safety, and the future of our community get elected into office.”

The Naas survey showed that Filipinos have been one of the most engaged Asian populations when it comes to non-voting participation by working on campaigns, donating, talking to friends and family, and online activity.

“Our goal is to translate that non-voting participation into voting participation,” Jopanda said.

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