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# 'No need to postpone 2019 polls amid federalism drive'

By GENALYN D. KABILING

**T**he proposed shift to a federal form of government can still be pursued without postponing the 2019 midterm elections, according to a Palace official.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said a draft Charter could be presented to the people in a plebiscite to be simultaneously held with the elections in May 2019.

"Bagama't ang Presidente po ay talagang para sa federal form of government ay pupuwede naman pong gawin iyan sa tamang panahon [Although the President supports a federal form of government, it can be implemented at the proper time]," Roque said in a television interview.

"Unang-una po, kung gusto talaga nilang iparating sa taumbayan iyong pagbabago ng gobyerno ay pupuwede naman pong isebay sa eleksyon ng 2019 iyong

plebisito para sa bagong Saligang Batas [First, if they really want to present to the public the changes in government, this can be done simultaneously with the 2019 elections – the plebiscite for a new Constitution]," he added.

Roque maintained that President Duterte prefers the 2019 elections to proceed as scheduled, junking the "no-election" scenario floated by a pro-administration lawmaker.

"Tutol nga po ang Presidente

\* ELECTION  
\* FEDERALISM



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sa no-el. Mas gusto niyang mag-  
eleksyon [The President is op-  
posed to no-el. He would rather  
like to push through with the  
elections],” he said.

“Pinapangako po niya, ang  
eleksyon sa 2019 po ay isang ma-  
giging malinis at isang credible  
na eleksyon [He has promised to  
ensure a clean and credible elec-  
tions in 2019],” he added.

Speaker Pantaleon Alvarez  
earlier said the 2019 elections  
could be postponed to pave the

way for the transition to the fed-  
eral form of government.

Alvarez wants Congress to  
convene as a constituent assem-  
bly and submit the new Charter  
to the people in a plebiscite this  
May.

Roque, however, said it was  
difficult to speculate on the post-  
ponement of the elections next  
year.

“The President’s assumption  
is we will have elections,” he  
said.