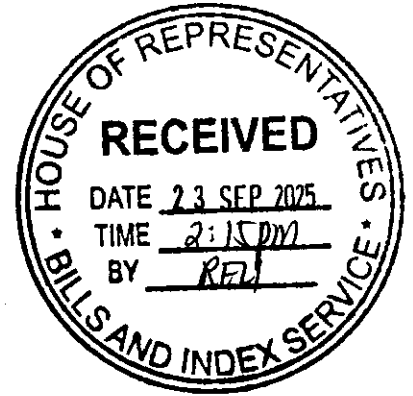


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Batasan Hills, Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session



HOUSE BILL NO. 4784

Introduced by Honorable Representative
SARAH JANE I. ELAGO (Gabriela Women's Party)

AN ACT
DEFINING AND PROHIBITING POLITICAL DYNASTIES

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 26 of the Constitution expressly provides that "The State shall guarantee equal access to public service and prohibit political dynasty, as may be defined by law."

The extended family system, otherwise historically interwoven in the Philippine context as an essential sphere of mutual survival, has found its pernicious effects in the political arena where public office has become the exclusive domain of elite families and clans. Such families have become so well-entrenched in Philippine politics that they have monopolized political power and public resources at all levels of government.

Once politicians are elected to public office, they immediately build a strong political base to ensure not only their re-election but also that such electoral support will extend to their spouses, descendants, or next of kin. These elected officials secure and consolidate their economic interest by maintaining the post of their families or clans in public office, essentially establishing a dynasty through public service, much like the hereditary monarchs and imperial families of old. This situation also reinforces and is reinforced by the patronage system in Philippine politics that hinders the development of the country.

The domination of political dynasties in Philippine elections became more evident during the May 2025 elections. They have fielded multiple candidates in national and local

positions in order to further concentrate, consolidate, and perpetuate their political power. According to the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, at least 18 obese political dynasties, or those with at least five clan members who are active in politics, have won in midterm elections.¹ This is different from the typical “fat” and “thin” classification of political dynasties. Fat political dynasties refer to those officials who have relatives that simultaneously hold office while thin dynasties refer to those officials with relative(s) who previously held elected office—they follow each other sequentially.²

A report by the United Nations Development Programme written by Professor Temario Rivera revealed that of the 77 provinces included in the study, 72 provinces or 94 percent (%) of which have political families. Furthermore, the average number of political families per province is 2.31, meaning there are at least two political clans in most Philippine provinces. According to Temario, since the restoration of elections in 1987, most dominant political families have succeeded in winning gubernatorial and congressional races. Even the party-list system—supposedly providing opportunity for marginalized and underrepresented sectors to participate in the lawmaking process—is now also being dominated by political families and big business interests.

The entrenched socioeconomic and political inequalities prevalent in Philippine society purposely limit public office to members of ruling families. This condition has persisted in the country for years, thus creating a clientelistic culture where the mass electorate depend on dominant families for favors, material and otherwise, in exchange for votes and prolonged political allegiance.

As a means to give force and effect to the social justice provisions of the Constitution that ensures broader political participation in the interest of the Filipino public, it is necessary for the political landscape to be leveled by prohibiting the concentration of powers to few elite Filipino families and clans that prioritize their personal and political interests than that of the public.

In light of the foregoing, this Bill is hereby proposed to give real teeth to the Constitutional mandate of ensuring equal access to public service, while also amplifying the

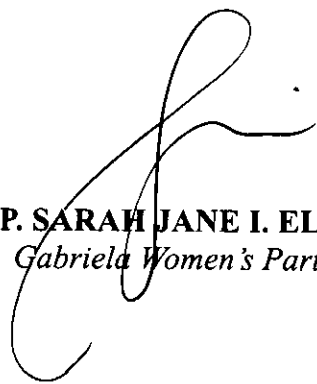
¹Fonbuena, C. S. “The ‘obese’ dynasties of the Philippines are crowned again, but reform hopes rise for 2028.” Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, 20 May 2025. Retrieved from <https://pcij.org/2025/05/20/obese-dynasties-of-the-philippines-results-crowned-again-but-reform-hopes-rise-2028-polls/>

²Mendoza, Ronald U. and Jaminola, Leonardo and Yap, Jurel, From Fat to Obese: Political Dynasties after the 2019 Midterm Elections (September 1, 2019). ATENEO SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT WORKING PAPER SERIES, September 2019, 19-013. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3449201> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3449201>

call for a new Philippine politics that will lay the basis of genuine empowerment and development for the vast majority of Filipinos.

Bayan Muna Party-List first filed a house bill prohibiting political dynasties in 2001. Similar measures filed by the Makabayan Bloc in the succeeding Congresses were disregarded and deprioritized by the Chamber. It is high time that we pass a Bill of great importance, that is also enshrined in and mandated by our Constitution.

For the foregoing reasons, the passage of this bill is sought.



REP. SARAH JANE I. ELAGO
Gabriela Women's Party

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AN ACT
DEFINING AND PROHIBITING POLITICAL DYNASTIES

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the Republic of the Philippines in Congress assembled:

SECTION 1. *Title.* – This Act shall be known as “*The Anti-Political Dynasty Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is the policy of the State to guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties.

SECTION 3. *Political Dynasty Defined.* – For purposes of this Act, a political dynasty is hereby defined as a family or clan that concentrates, consolidates, or perpetuates their political power by holding public office simultaneously or successively.

SECTION 4. *Prohibition on Political Dynasty.* – Political dynasties are hereby prohibited. To this end:

- 1) No person shall hold or run for any elective national or local office simultaneously with another within the fourth degree of consanguinity or affinity, whether legitimate or illegitimate, full or half blood; and
- 2) No person within the prohibited civil degree of relationship to an incumbent elected official shall immediately succeed to the position of the latter.

SECTION 5. *Applicability.* – This Act shall govern and be applicable to the next elections and to all subsequent elections thereafter.

SECTION 6. *Statement with the Commission on Elections.* – Any person running for any elective public office shall file a sworn statement with the COMELEC that they do not fall under the prohibition under Section 4 of this Act.

SECTION 7. *Effect of Violation of Prohibition.* – The COMELEC shall, *motu proprio* or upon verified petition of any interested party, deny due course to any certificate of candidacy filed in violation of this Act.

The votes cast for the disqualified candidate, if any, shall not be counted and deemed not counted nor shall such candidate be proclaimed nor be qualified to assume office.

SECTION 8. *Period for Filing Petition for Disqualification.* – Any citizen of voting age, candidate, or duly registered political party, organization, or coalition of political parties may file with the COMELEC, after the last day for filing of certificates of candidacy and before proclamation, a petition to disqualify a candidate on grounds provided for under Section 4 hereof.

SECTION 9. *Summary Proceedings.* – The petition shall be heard and decided summarily by the COMELEC, after due notice and hearing, and its decision shall be executory after the lapse of five (5) days from receipt thereof by the losing party.

SECTION 10. *Effect of Petition if Unresolved Before Completion of Canvass.* – If the petition, for reasons beyond the control of the COMELEC, cannot be decided before the completion of the canvass, the votes cast for the respondent shall be included in the counting and canvassing: *Provided, however*, that if the basis for such disqualification is strong, their proclamation shall be suspended notwithstanding the fact that they received the winning number of votes in the election: *Provided further*, that in cases where disqualified candidate has been proclaimed they shall *ipso facto* forfeit their right to the office.

SECTION 11. *Rules and Regulations.* – The COMELEC shall promulgate the rules and regulations for the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 12. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 13. *Separability Clause.* – If any of the sections or provisions of this Act is held invalid, all the other provisions not affected thereby shall remain valid.

SECTION 14. *Effectivity Clause.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days from the date of its publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,