

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

Twentieth Congress
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **6827**



Introduced by Representative RAYMOND ADRIAN SALCEDA

**AN ACT
STRENGTHENING POLITICAL PARTIES, REFORMING THE PARTY-LIST
SYSTEM THROUGH PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION, PROMOTING
PARTY DISCIPLINE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The 1987 Constitution envisions a democratic system in which political parties serve as the principal vehicles for political participation, representation, and governance. Article VI, Section 5(2) establishes a party-list system to complement district representation, while Article II, Section 26 expresses a constitutional policy against political dynasties. Taken together, these provisions reflect an institutional design that favors pluralism, party-based competition, and equal access to public office, rather than personality-driven or purely factional politics.

More than three decades after the ratification of the Constitution, however, the Philippine political party system remains weakly institutionalized. Political parties are often fluid, personalistic, and transactional, with limited programmatic coherence and unstable membership. The party-list system, which was intended to strengthen organized political participation, has instead become one of the most litigated and administratively discretionary features of the electoral system. This Act responds to those structural weaknesses by redesigning the incentives that shape party behavior, rather than by moralizing political conduct or expanding regulatory discretion.

Party-List Reform as Proportional Representation

At the core of this measure is the reconceptualization of the party-list system as a **straightforward mechanism of proportional representation**. The Constitution fixes party-list representation at twenty percent (20%) of the total membership of the House of Representatives, but does not prescribe seat caps, vote thresholds, or allocation formulas. Those features were introduced by statute and refined through jurisprudence, resulting in a complex system marked by recalculation, doctrinal shifts, and repeated judicial intervention.

This Act removes statutory seat caps and adopts a single, transparent allocation formula based on a quota and largest-remainder method, with a limitation of one remainder seat per party. Under this design, votes are translated into seats in a predictable and mechanical manner. Electoral success is neither penalized by artificial caps nor distorted by discretionary

adjustments. The link between voter preference and legislative representation is thereby strengthened.

The removal of seat caps addresses a fundamental distortion: caps sever the proportional relationship between votes and seats and undermine the very logic of proportional representation. When parties that obtain substantial electoral support are prevented from translating that support into commensurate representation, the system weakens party incentives to build national constituencies and coherent platforms.

Ending Arbitrary Definitions of “Marginalization”

A central source of instability in the existing party-list system has been the attempt to define, certify, and police “marginalized and underrepresented” sectors through administrative and judicial processes. These efforts have required the Commission on Elections to make sociological and political judgments for which it is not institutionally designed and for which there is no clear constitutional standard.

While jurisprudence has evolved to allow broader participation by national and regional political parties, the persistence of sectoral and marginalization tests continues to vest excessive discretionary power in administrative bodies. This Act resolves that problem decisively by **removing arbitrary sectoral classifications altogether** and returning the determination of political relevance to the electorate. Under the reformed system, representation flows from votes received, not from administrative certification of worthiness.

Maturing Political Parties Through Institutional Incentives

The Act seeks to mature the political party system by making parties—not individual candidates—the primary unit of political competition and accountability. Requirements for party manifestos, ranked nominee lists, coalition disclosure, and performance-based access to public resources are designed to encourage parties to develop coherent platforms, invest in organization, and compete programmatically.

Access to scarce public platforms such as free broadcast media and nationally sponsored debates is allocated based on demonstrated electoral support. This design ensures that voter performance, rather than regulatory discretion, determines party visibility and influence. Smaller or emerging parties remain free to organize and compete, while parties that earn voter trust gain greater institutional presence.

Addressing Turncoatism Without Violating Constitutional Qualifications

Frequent party switching undermines democratic accountability by weakening the relationship between electoral choice and legislative behavior. At the same time, the Constitution protects the right of qualified persons to hold office. This Act adopts a calibrated response that respects both principles.

For district representatives, party switching during the term results in the loss of party-based privileges and positions, reflecting the personal and geographic nature of their electoral mandate. For party-list representatives, whose seats are entirely party-derived, separation from the party results in forfeiture of the seat, which reverts to the party list. This distinction

reinforces party discipline without adding qualifications for elective office or invalidating elections.

Limited Integrity Safeguards on Political Dynasties in Party-List Representation

Within this broader framework of party system reform, the Act includes narrowly tailored provisions addressing political dynasties **only in relation to party-list representation**. These provisions are not the centerpiece of the reform, but function as integrity safeguards to prevent the party-list system from being used as a fallback mechanism for familial entrenchment in public office.

The Act does not regulate candidacy, invalidate votes, or disqualify individuals from election. Instead, it regulates the **assumption and holding of party-list seats**, which are allocated to parties rather than won through individual territorial mandates. Where a party-list nominee is closely related to an incumbent elective official, or where multiple closely related nominees appear within the same party-list, the Act limits who may assume or continue to hold party-list seats, while preserving the party's proportional entitlement through substitution.

Comparative Experience and Institutional Design

Comparative experience supports the institutional choices embodied in this Act. Germany and New Zealand adopted proportional or corrective electoral mechanisms precisely to address distortions produced by majoritarian systems. In both cases, proportionality strengthened the correspondence between votes and seats and encouraged parties to compete programmatically at the national level. These systems rely on mechanical, vote-driven allocation rather than administrative discretion.

Singapore, while operating in a different political context, illustrates a complementary institutional insight: electoral systems may incorporate **explicit structural guarantees** to ensure pluralism and opposition presence without resorting to discretionary certification or ideological tests. What unites these experiences is the decision to embed pluralism and accountability in the **design of the electoral system itself**, rather than in regulatory gatekeeping.

Conclusion

This Act proceeds from a single institutional premise: **political parties mature when electoral rules reward coherence, stability, and voter trust, and when representation is determined by transparent, mechanical processes rather than discretionary judgment**. By removing artificial seat caps, eliminating arbitrary marginalization tests, strengthening party-based incentives, discouraging turncoatism, and adopting limited integrity safeguards, the Act seeks to realign the Philippine party-list system with the constitutional vision of pluralistic, party-based democratic representation.

The objective of this reform is not to police political morality, but to create conditions under which political parties can develop into durable, programmatic institutions capable of sustaining democratic governance over time.

Simulation

Assumptions:

Total House membership: 316

Party-list allocation (20%): 63 seats

Total valid party-list votes: 21,000,000

Step 1. Compute the Quota

Quota = Total votes ÷ Party-list seats

Quota = 21,000,000 ÷ 63

Quota = 333,333 votes per seat

Step 2. Illustrative Party-List Votes

Party	Votes
Party A	6,000,000
Party B	4,500,000
Party C	3,600,000
Party D	2,700,000
Party E	1,800,000
Party F	900,000
Others	1,500,000
Total	21,000,000

Step 3. Allocate Whole Seats

Whole seats = floor(Votes ÷ Quota)

Party	Votes	Whole Seats	Remainder
Party A	6,000,000	18	0
Party B	4,500,000	13	166,671
Party C	3,600,000	10	266,670
Party D	2,700,000	8	33,336
Party E	1,800,000	5	133,335
Party F	900,000	2	233,334
Others	1,500,000	4	166,668

Total whole seats allocated: 60

Remaining seats: 3

Step 4. Allocate Remaining Seats (Largest Remainders)

(Maximum of one remainder seat per party)

Remainders ranked:

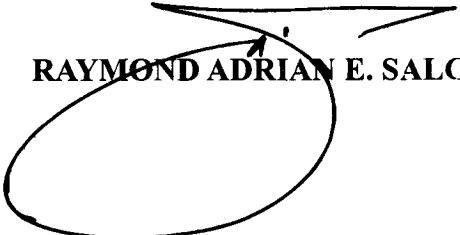
1. Party C – 266,670 → +1 seat
2. Party F – 233,334 → +1 seat
3. Others – 166,668 → +1 seat

All remaining seats allocated.

Final Party-List Seat Allocation

Party	Seats
Party A	18
Party B	13
Party C	11
Party D	8
Party E	5
Party F	3
Others	5
Total	63

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


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

SEC. 1. Short Title.— This Act shall be known as the “Political Parties and Party-List System Reform Act.”

SEC. 2. Declaration of Policy.— It is the policy of the State to strengthen political parties as the principal vehicles of democratic representation, to promote programmatic and platform-based political competition, and to ensure a transparent and proportional party-list system that faithfully reflects the will of the electorate. Toward this end, the State shall encourage the formation, consolidation, and maturation of political parties, respect political pluralism and voter choice, and allocate party-list representation in the House of Representatives strictly in proportion to votes received, consistent with the Constitution.

SEC. 3. Construction.— This Act shall be liberally construed to promote the development of a stable, coherent, and competitive political party system, to minimize discretionary regulation of political parties, and to ensure that voter preference remains the primary determinant of political representation.

TITLE II
POLITICAL PARTIES

SEC. 4. Right to Organize and Register.— Political parties may freely organize, merge, affiliate, or coalesce for political purposes, subject only to registration requirements prescribed by law to ensure transparency, organizational existence, and accountability. No political party shall be denied registration on the basis of ideology, policy position, or sectoral affiliation.

SEC. 5. Party Registration.— Political parties seeking registration shall submit to the Commission on Elections such documents as may be necessary to establish their name, officers, internal governing rules, membership requirements, and principal address. Registration requirements shall be uniform, ministerial, and non-discretionary.

SEC. 6. Party Manifesto and Platform.— Every registered political party shall adopt, publish, and file with the Commission on Elections a party manifesto setting forth its principles, policy positions, and legislative priorities. The manifesto shall be made publicly available for the information of voters and shall serve as the basis for party accountability.

SEC. 7. Party Membership and Affiliation.— Political parties shall maintain a membership registry in accordance with their internal rules. For purposes of elections, a candidate's party affiliation shall be determined by membership in a political party for a period of at least one (1) year immediately preceding the filing of the certificate of candidacy, except in cases of party merger, consolidation, or dissolution.

SEC. 8. Party Coalitions.— Two or more political parties may form a coalition for electoral purposes. Coalitions shall be registered with the Commission on Elections prior to the filing of certificates of candidacy and shall submit a joint manifesto or coalition agreement, which shall be made publicly available.

SEC. 9. Party Switching During the Term.— An elected official who changes political party affiliation during the term for which the official was elected shall forfeit any party-based positions, committee memberships, leadership roles, or other privileges in the House of Representatives or in any elective body that were allocated on the basis of party representation or party strength.

TITLE III PARTY DISCIPLINE

SEC. 10. Effects of Party Switching.— Party switching during the term shall not affect the validity of the election, the assumption of office, or the continuance in office of the elected official in the case of district representatives; *Provided*, That a party-list representative who ceases to be a member of, or is expelled from, the political party or coalition under which the representative was elected shall forfeit the party-list seat, and the vacancy shall be filled by the next qualified nominee in the party list, in accordance with this Act and existing laws.

SEC. 11. Lock-In Period for Party Affiliation.— Except in cases of party merger, consolidation, or dissolution, no candidate shall be recognized as the official nominee or candidate of a political party unless the candidate has been a member of such party for at least one (1) year immediately preceding the filing of the certificate of candidacy.

SEC. 12. Internal Party Democracy.— Every registered political party shall adopt and disclose internal rules governing membership admission, leadership selection, and candidate nomination. The State shall not interfere in the internal decision-making of political parties, except to ensure compliance with disclosure and procedural requirements under this Act.

TITLE IV PARTY-LIST SYSTEM AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION

SEC. 13. Nature of the Party-List Vote.— The party-list vote shall be a vote for a political party or coalition. Party-list representatives shall be elected through a system of proportional representation based on the total number of votes obtained by each party or coalition nationwide.

SEC. 14. Party-List Seats.— Party-list representatives shall constitute twenty percent (20%) of the total membership of the House of Representatives. The total number of party-list seats shall be determined accordingly after the election of district representatives.

SEC. 15. Party-List Nominee Lists.— Each registered political party or coalition participating in the party-list system shall submit to the Commission on Elections, prior to the election, a closed and ranked list of nominees. Party-list seats allocated to a party or coalition shall be filled strictly in the order of nominees as submitted.

SEC. 16. Allocation of Party-List Seats.— Party-list seats shall be allocated among participating parties and coalitions strictly in proportion to the total number of valid party-list votes received, in accordance with the following rules:

(a) The total number of valid party-list votes cast shall be divided by the total number of party-list seats to determine the quota.

(b) Each party or coalition shall be allocated a number of seats equal to the whole number obtained by dividing its total votes by the quota.

(c) Remaining seats, if any, shall be allocated one seat at a time to parties or coalitions with the largest remainders, computed by subtracting the votes corresponding to the seats already allocated from the total votes received; *Provided*, That no party or coalition shall receive more than one (1) additional seat under this paragraph.

SEC. 17. Filling of Vacancies.— Any vacancy in a party-list seat arising from death, resignation, disqualification, expulsion from the party, or forfeiture under this Act shall be filled by the next qualified nominee in the party list of the same party or coalition.

TITLE V PARTY PERFORMANCE AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC RESOURCES

SEC. 18. Access to Free Broadcast Media.— Registered political parties and coalitions shall be entitled to free access to broadcast media during the official campaign period. Such access shall be allocated in proportion to the total number of votes obtained by each party or coalition in the most recent national election, in accordance with rules promulgated by the Commission on Elections.

SEC. 19. Participation in Nationally Sponsored Debates.— Participation in nationally sponsored political debates shall be limited to political parties or coalitions that obtained at least one (1) seat or at least one quota under the party-list system in the most recent election, subject to reasonable rules to ensure orderly and meaningful public discourse.

SEC. 20. Public Party Support.— Political parties and coalitions that obtain votes in national elections may be entitled to modest public support, allocated in proportion to votes

received, to be used exclusively for political education, policy research, party organization, and voter engagement, subject to accounting and transparency requirements prescribed by law.

TITLE VI POLITICAL DYNASTIES IN PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATION

SEC. 21. Party-List Political Dynasty Defined.— A party-list political dynasty exists when a party-list nominee or representative is related within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to a person who is elected to, or is holding, any elective public office, whether national or local.

SEC. 22. Limitation on the Holding of Party-List Seats.— Notwithstanding entitlement to a party-list seat, no party-list nominee or representative may assume or continue to hold a party-list seat if a relative within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity holds any other elective public office, whether national or local. Any party-list seat not assumed or vacated by operation of this section shall be filled by the next qualified nominee in the party-list of the same party or coalition, in accordance with this Act.

SEC. 23. Additional Limitation Within the Same Party-List.— Within the same party-list or coalition list, no two (2) nominees or representatives related within the fourth civil degree of consanguinity or affinity may simultaneously assume or hold party-list seats. Any seat not assumed or vacated pursuant to this section shall be filled by the next qualified nominee in the party-list of the same party or coalition.

SEC. 24. Construction.— Nothing in this Title shall be construed as a disqualification from nomination, candidacy, or election under the party-list system, nor as an addition to or modification of the constitutional qualifications for elective office. This Title shall be construed solely as a regulation of the assumption and holding of party-list seats, consistent with Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution.

TITLE VII IMPLEMENTATION AND TRANSITION

SEC. 25. Role of the Commission on Elections.— The Commission on Elections shall implement this Act in a ministerial and mechanical manner, limited to the registration of political parties and coalitions, the tabulation of votes, the allocation of party-list seats in accordance with the formula prescribed herein, and the enforcement of the effects of party affiliation and party-list representation as provided by law. The Commission shall not exercise discretionary authority to evaluate ideology, sectoral representation, or political belief.

SEC. 26. Implementing Rules and Regulations.— The Commission on Elections shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations necessary to carry out this Act within ninety (90) days from its effectivity. Such rules shall be strictly confined to technical and procedural matters and shall not add to, subtract from, or modify the substantive provisions of this Act.

SEC. 27. Transition to the Reformed Party-List System.— The party-list system provided under this Act shall apply beginning with the first national and local elections following its effectivity. Political parties and organizations previously registered under existing

party-list laws shall be deemed registered under this Act, subject to compliance with the requirements on party registration, manifesto submission, and nominee lists herein prescribed.

SEC. 28. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The Commission on Elections shall promulgate such rules and regulations as may be necessary to implement this Act in a manner consistent with the Constitution, limited to recognizing and enforcing the operational effects herein provided. The failure of the Commission to issue and promulgate such rules shall not preclude the implementation of the provisions of this Act.

SEC. 29. *Repealing Clause.*— Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the “*Party-List System Act*,” is hereby repealed in its entirety. All laws, decrees, executive orders, rules and regulations, and other issuances or parts thereof that are inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, including but not limited to statutory seat caps, vote thresholds, sectoral or marginalization requirements, and allocation formulas not expressly provided herein, are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SEC. 30. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC. 31. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,