

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Diliman, Quezon City

20th CONGRESS
First Regular Session

House Bill No. **7002**



Introduced by: **HON. MARK ANTHONY G. SANTOS**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article VI, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution establishes the party-list system as a means to ensure the representation of marginalized and underrepresented sectors in the House of Representatives. The Constitution reserves a portion of the House membership for national, regional, and sectoral parties and organizations in order to broaden democratic participation and correct historical imbalances in political power.

Jurisprudence has consistently emphasized that the party-list system is rooted in social justice. As articulated by the Supreme Court, its purpose is not merely to expand electoral participation but to empower sectors that have traditionally been excluded from policymaking. The system was designed to enable marginalized groups to take part directly in the legislative process and to advance laws responsive to their specific needs, rather than to serve as an alternative route for established political interests. This bill aims to codify this judicial interpretation into law and statute.

Over time, however, the implementation of the party-list system has drifted from its original constitutional intent. Liberal interpretations of eligibility have allowed participation by parties and organizations that do not genuinely represent marginalized and underrepresented sectors, thereby diluting the system's purpose of providing adequate representation for social justice. In many cases, the party-list system has been utilized to advance political interests or advocacies that are inconsistent with its foundational purpose.

This departure from the Constitution's mandate undermines the very inequities the party-list system was intended to address. Instead of leveling the political playing field, the current framework risks reinforcing social, economic, and political disparities by allowing dominance by groups with well-defined constituencies and established resources.

This bill seeks to restore the party-list system to its original role as a mechanism for meaningful sectoral representation by clarifying qualifications, strengthening regulatory safeguards, and ensuring that participation is limited to parties and organizations that genuinely represent marginalized and underrepresented sectors. By doing so, it reaffirms the party-list system as an instrument of social justice and inclusive democracy.

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

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MARK ANTHONY G. SANTOS

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AN ACT REFORMING THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM AND AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7941, ENTITLED “AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE ELECTION OF PARTY-LIST REPRESENTATIVES THROUGH THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM, AND APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFOR”, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE ‘PARTY-LIST SYSTEM ACT’ AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES REFORMING THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM

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

SECTION 1. *Short Title.* — This Act shall be known as the “Party-List Reform Act of 2025”.

SECTION 2. *Amendment to Section 5, Republic Act No. 7941.*— Section 5 of Republic Act No. 7941 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 5. Registration. —

Any political party, sector, organization or coalition, whether national, regional, or sectoral, may register for purposes of the party-list system, provided that they must represent the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties and that they lack a well-defined constituency, by filing with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC) not later than ninety (90) days before the election a petition verified by its president or secretary stating its desire to participate in the party-list system as a national, regional or sectoral party, organization, or coalition, attaching its constitution, by-laws, platform or program of government, list of officers, coalition agreement, and other relevant information as the COMELEC may require.

A majority of its membership should belong to the marginalized and underrepresented sectors it seeks to represent.

The COMELEC shall publish the petition in at least two (2) national newspapers of general circulation.

The COMELEC shall, after due notice and hearing, resolve the petition within fifteen (15) days from submission for decision but in no case later than sixty (60) days before the election.

SECTION 3. *Amendment to Section 6 of Republic Act 7941.* — The amendment to Section 6 of Republic Act 7941 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 6. Refusal and/or Cancellation of Registration. —

The COMELEC may, *motu proprio* or upon verified complaint of any interested party, refuse or cancel, after due notice and hearing, the registration of any national, regional or sectoral party, organization or coalition on any of the following grounds:

1. It is a religious sect or denomination, organization or association organized for religious purposes;
2. It advocates violence or unlawful means to seek its goal;
3. It is a foreign party or organization;
4. It is receiving support from any foreign government, foreign political party, foundation, organization, whether directly or through any of its officers or members or indirectly through third parties for partisan election purposes;
5. It violates or fails to comply with laws, rules or regulations relating to elections;
6. It declares untruthful statements in its petition;
7. It has ceased to exist for at least one (1) year;
8. It fails to participate in the last two (2) preceding elections or fails to obtain at least two per centum (2 %) of the votes cast under the party-list system in the two (2) preceding elections for the constituency in which it has registered;
9. For failure to represent the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties and/or having a well-defined constituency;
10. For failure of the majority of its members to belong to the marginalized and underrepresented sector, organization or party that they represent;
11. For directly or indirectly participating in acts detrimental to the best interest of the Government, to overthrow the Government, or to be associated by any means to rebels or terrorist groups;
12. For ceasing to be a marginalized and underrepresented sector, organization or party; or
13. For material misrepresentation of its nominee’s qualification.”

SECTION 4. *Amendment to Section 9 of Republic Act 7941.* — Section 9 of Republic Act No. 7941 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Section 9. Qualifications of Party-List Nominees. —

No person shall be nominated as party-list representative unless he is a natural-born citizen of the Philippines, a registered voter, a resident of the Philippines for not less than one (1) year immediately preceding the day of the election, able to read and write, a bona fide member of the party or organization he seeks to represent for at least ninety (90) days preceding the day of the election, and at least twenty-five (25) years of age on the day of the election.

The nominees must belong to the marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations and parties, having the common characteristic of its membership and not just sharing the same beliefs or advocacy.

In the case of a nominee of the youth sector, he must be at least twenty-five (25) but not more than thirty (30) years of age on the day of the election. Any youth sectoral representative who attains the age of thirty (30) during his term may continue in office until the expiration of his term.”

SECTION 5. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act or its application to any person or circumstance is held unconstitutional or invalid, the remainder of this Act or application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

SECTION 6. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, rules, regulations, or parts thereof inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SECTION 7. *Effectivity Clause.* — 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.