

**Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City**

**TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session**

House Bill No. 7365



**Introduced by TUCP Partylist Representative
HON. RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP) has long called for urgent sweeping reforms to restore the party-list to its true noble purpose of empowering the truly marginalized and underrepresented, particularly Filipino workers and their families, who continue to suffer from poverty wages, precarious employment, and the erosion of their rights. This call for reform has become even more urgent in light of the findings of the election watchdog Kontra Daya which revealed the alarming reality that 86 out of the 156 party-list groups that participated in the 2025 elections do not genuinely represent marginalized and underrepresented sectors, but instead have ties to big business, the police and military, dubious advocacies, and even corruption scandals.¹

Republic Act No. 7941, known as the Party-List System Act, states in its policy declaration that it seeks "to promote proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives through the party-list system," enabling Filipinos belonging to "marginalized and underrepresented sectors, organizations, and parties, and who lack well-defined political constituencies" to become members of the House of Representatives. It further states that "the sectors shall include labor, peasants, fisherfolk, the urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, the elderly, persons with disabilities, women, youth, veterans, overseas workers, and professionals."

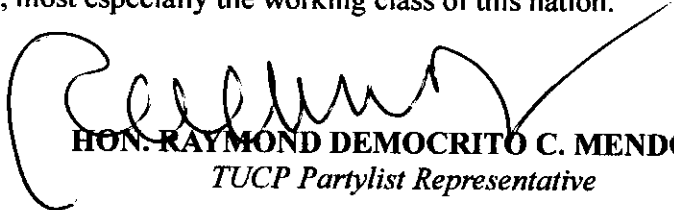
Outraged by the blatant bastardization of the party-list system already hijacked by the rich, the powerful, and the corrupt which are the very forces it was designed to guard against, the TUCP Party-list files this proposed Party-list Reform Act to restore voice to the voiceless, level the political playing field, and ensure genuine representation of the marginalized and the underrepresented to fight for their causes. Central to this measure is the long-overdue definition of "marginalized and underrepresented sectors," which incorporates the concept of basic sectors or disadvantaged sectors of Philippine society as defined under Republic Act No. 8425 or the Social Reform and Poverty Alleviation Act. These include farmer-peasants, artisanal fisherfolk, workers in the formal sector and migrant workers, workers in the

¹ Aning, J. (13 February 2025). Kontra Daya: Over half of party lists don't represent poor. *Inquirer.net*. <https://www.inquirer.net/428606/kontra-daya-over-half-of-party-lists-dont-represent-poor/>

informal sector, indigenous peoples and cultural communities, women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, victims of calamities and disasters, youth and students, children, and the urban poor, as well as such other sectors as may be provided by law. To further ensure and operationalize genuine representation, this proposed measure mandates evidentiary public hearings for all party-list applicants, ensuring that participating organizations and their nominees can clearly demonstrate authentic sectoral membership, representation, and a proven track record of advocacy for the sectors they claim to represent.

The bill also expands the grounds for the refusal or cancellation of party-list registration by including the use of names or brands referring to government agencies, instrumentalities, policies, programs, or projects as well as popular programs and personalities which may lead to misrepresentation; the nomination of individuals who do not genuinely belong to or have no demonstrable track record with the marginalized and underrepresented sectors claimed; instances where the majority of party-list members do not belong to such sectors; and cases involving material misrepresentation, omission, or falsification regarding qualifications, sectoral affiliation, or eligibility. It also categorically disqualifies individuals holding appointive or elective office unless they have resigned and such resignation has been accepted, as well as those related by consanguinity or affinity up to the fourth civil degree to any incumbent elected official, or those who have served as contractors in government projects.

The passage of this proposed Party-list Reform Act is earnestly sought because political dynasties, business magnates, entrenched elites, or those with dubious interests to entrench themselves further have no moral, legal, or constitutional right to occupy party-list seats because the bastardization of the party-list system is not only an aberration of the Constitution and the law, but an insult to every marginalized and underrepresented Filipino, most especially the working class of this nation.



HON. RAYMOND DEMOCRITO C. MENDOZA
TUCP Partylist Representative

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AN ACT 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

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.”

SECTION 2. Section 3 of Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the “Party-List System Act,” is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 3. Definition of Terms.

(a) The party-list system is a mechanism of proportional representation in the election of representatives to the House of Representatives from national, regional and sectoral parties or organizations or coalitions thereof registered with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC). Component parties or organizations of a coalition may participate independently provided the coalition of which they form part does not participate in the party-list system.

(b) A party means either a political party or a sectoral party or a coalition of parties.

(c) A political party refers to an organized group of citizens advocating an ideology or platform, principles and policies for the general conduct of government and which, as the most immediate means of securing their adoption, regularly nominates and supports certain of its leaders and members as candidates for public office.

It is a national party when its constituency is spread over the geographical territory of at least a majority of the regions. It is a regional party when its

constituency is spread over the geographical territory of at least a majority of the cities and provinces comprising the region.

(d) A sectoral party refers to an organized group of citizens belonging to any of the sectors enumerated in Section 5 hereof whose principal advocacy pertains to the special interest and concerns of their sector,

(e) A sectoral organization refers to a group of citizens or a coalition of groups of citizens who share similar physical attributes or characteristics, employment, interests or concerns.

(f) A coalition refers to an aggrupation of duly registered national, regional, sectoral parties or organizations for political and/or election purposes.

(G) MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS REFER TO 'BASIC SECTORS' DEFINED BY REPUBLIC ACT NO. 8425, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS THE SOCIAL REFORM AND POVERTY ALLEVIATION ACT, AS 'THE DISADVANTAGED SECTORS OF PHILIPPINE SOCIETY, NAMELY: FARMER-PEASANT, ARTISANAL FISHERFOLK, WORKERS IN THE FORMAL SECTOR AND MIGRANT WORKERS, WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES, WOMEN, DIFFERENTLY-ABLED PERSONS, SENIOR CITIZENS, VICTIMS OF CALAMITIES AND DISASTERS, YOUTH AND STUDENTS, CHILDREN, AND URBAN POOR' AND SUCH OTHER SECTORS AS MAY BE PROVIDED BY LAW.

SECTION 3. Section 5 of the said Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 5. Registration. Any organized group of persons may register as a party, organization or coalition for purposes of the party-list system, **PROVIDED THAT THEY SHALL REPRESENT THE MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS**, by filing with the 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 or organization or a coalition of such parties or organizations, attaching thereto its constitution, by-laws, platform or program of government, list of officers, coalition agreement and other relevant information as the COMELEC may require: Provided, That the sectors shall include **FARMER-PEASANT, ARTISANAL FISHERFOLK, WORKERS IN THE FORMAL SECTOR AND MIGRANT WORKERS, WORKERS IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR, INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES, WOMEN, DIFFERENTLY-ABLED PERSONS, SENIOR CITIZENS, VICTIMS OF CALAMITIES AND DISASTERS,**

YOUTH AND STUDENTS, CHILDREN, AND URBAN POOR, AND SUCH OTHER SECTORS AS MAY BE PROVIDED BY LAW.

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

NO GROUP, ORGANIZATION OR POLITICAL PARTY SHALL BE ELIGIBLE FOR REGISTRATION AS A PARTY-LIST GROUP UNLESS IT HAS PROVEN IN AN EVIDENTIARY PUBLIC HEARING THAT SHALL BE CONDUCTED BY THE COMELEC THAT IT TRULY REPRESENTS MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTOR/S AND ITS NOMINEES BELONG TO THE SECTOR/S THEY SEEK TO REPRESENT; PROVIDED, THAT COMELEC SHALL NOTIFY ALL DULY REGISTERED AND ACCREDITED PARTY-LIST GROUPS, ORGANIZATION OR POLITICAL PARTIES OF THE HEARING AT LEAST TEN DAYS PRIOR TO THE SAID HEARING.

The COMELEC shall, after due notice and hearing, resolve the petition within fifteen (15) days from the date it was submitted for decision but in no case not later than sixty (60) days before election.”

SECTION 4. Section 6 of the said Act 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; [or]

(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) IT IS NAMED AFTER, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, OR USES AS ITS IDENTIFYING BRAND, ANY GOVERNMENT AGENCY, INSTRUMENTALITY, POLICY, PROGRAM, OR PROJECT, WHICH MAY MISLEADINGLY SUGGEST OFFICIAL GOVERNMENT SPONSORSHIP, ENDORSEMENT, OR AFFILIATION;

(10) IT IS NAMED AFTER, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, OR USES AS ITS IDENTIFYING BRAND, ANY PUBLIC PROGRAM OR PERSONALITY, WHICH MAY MISLEADINGLY SUGGEST SPONSORSHIP, ENDORSEMENT, OR AFFILIATION WITH SUCH PUBLIC PROGRAM OR PERSONALITY;

(11) ITS NOMINEES DO NOT GENUINELY REPRESENT, OR HAVE NO DEMONSTRABLE TRACK RECORD WITH THE MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS THAT THE PARTY-LIST CLAIMS TO REPRESENT;

(12) THE MAJORITY OF ITS BONA FIDE MEMBERS DO NOT BELONG TO THE MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS IT SEEKS TO REPRESENT AS EVIDENCED BY ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE, MEMBERSHIP RECORDS, AND ACTUAL ACTIVITIES; OR

(13) ITS NOMINEES COMMITTEED MATERIAL MISREPRESENTATION, OMISSION, OR FALSIFICATION REGARDING THEIR QUALIFICATIONS, SECTORAL AFFILIATION, OR ELIGIBILITY WHETHER IN SWORN STATEMENTS OR OTHER SUBMISSIONS TO THE COMELEC.

SECTION 5. Section 8 of the said Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

Section 8. Nomination of Party-List Representatives. Each registered party, organization or coalition shall submit to the COMELEC not later than forty-five (45) days before the election a list of names, not less than five (5), from which party-list representatives shall be chosen in case it obtains the required number of votes. votes. **THE LIST OF TEN NOMINEES TO BE SUBMITTED TO THE COMELEC MUST BE APPROVED BY THE HIGHEST DECISION-MAKING BODY OF THE PARTY-LIST GROUP IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS, AND SUCH APPROVAL SHALL BE EVIDENCED BY A**

SWORN CERTIFICATION EXECUTED BY ITS AUTHORIZED OFFICERS.

A person may be nominated in one (1) list only. Only persons who have given their consent in writing may be named in the list. The list shall not include any candidate for any elective office or a person who has lost his bid for an elective office in the immediately preceding election. No change of names or alteration of the order of nominees shall be allowed after the same shall have been submitted to the COMELEC except in cases where the nominee dies, or withdraws in writing his nomination, becomes incapacitated in which case the name of the substitute nominee shall be placed last in the list. Incumbent sectoral representatives in the House of Representatives who are nominated in the party-list system shall not be considered resigned.

NO PERSON OCCUPYING AN APPOINTIVE OR ELECTIVE POST SHALL BE INCLUDED IN THE LIST UNLESS THEY ENCLOSE THEREIN THEIR LETTER OF RESIGNATION TO THAT OFFICE AND THE DUE ACCEPTANCE OR APPROVAL THEREOF, WHICH SHALL FORM PART OF THE SUBMISSIONS TO THE COMELEC.

SECTION 6. Section 9 of the said Act 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 a period of 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 which he seeks to represent for at least ninety (90) days preceding the day of the election, and is at least twenty-five (25) years of age on the day of the election.

In case of a nominee of the youth sector, he must at least be 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 shall be allowed to continue in office until the expiration of his term.

NO PERSON SHALL BE QUALIFIED TO BECOME A PARTY-LIST NOMINEE IF THEY ARE A PERSON:

(A) WHO IS RELATED BY AFFINITY OR CONSANGUINITY TO THE FOURTH DEGREE TO ANY INCUMBENT ELECTED OFFICIAL; OR

(B) WHO IS OR HAD BEEN A CONTRACTOR IN ANY GOVERNMENT PROJECT, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS, WHETHER AS AN INDIVIDUAL OR AS AN INCORPORATOR, DIRECTOR, OFFICER, OR PERSON

**IN ANY WAY RELATED TO A CORPORATION THAT IS OR HAD
BEEN A CONTRACTOR.**

SECTION 7. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within sixty (60) days from the effectivity of this Act, the COMELEC shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

SECTION 8. *Separability Clause* – If any provision or part of this Act is declared invalid or unconstitutional, the remaining provisions or parts of this act shall remain in full force and effect, and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

SECTION 9. *Repealing Clause.* - All laws, orders, issuances, rules, and regulations or parts thereof inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.

SECTION 10. *Effectivity.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,