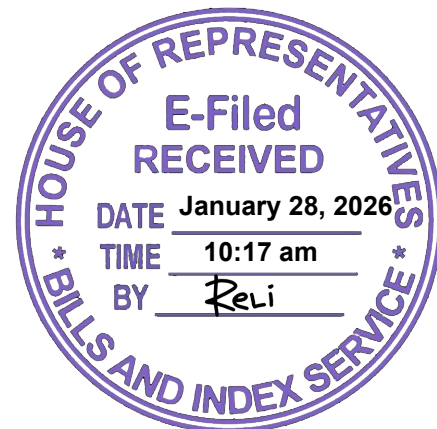


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session
House Bill No. **7453**



Introduced by: Congressman **BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.**

AN ACT
DEFINING AND PROHIBITING POLITICAL DYNASTY RELATIONSHIPS IN
NATIONAL, LOCAL, BARANGAY, AND SANGGUNIANG KABATAAN, AND
PARTY-LIST ELECTIONS

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution declares: "The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service, and prohibit political dynasties **as may be defined by law.**" Yet the Supreme Court has held that this command is not self-executing and awaits legislative definition and standards for enforcement.¹

Political dynasties erode democratic competition and accountability by concentrating public authority within a narrow circle of families. When elective office becomes effectively hereditary, the constitutional promise of equal opportunity is reduced to form, and public service risks being transformed from a trust into a private entitlement. This measure gives concrete life to the constitutional policy by defining "political dynasty," establishing clear standards for prohibited relationships, and setting out firm yet fair rules for disqualification and enforcement. It deliberately extends its coverage to all elective offices, including those at the barangay level and the Sangguniang Kabataan, where dynastic control often first takes root and is later projected to higher levels of government. By addressing the problem at its earliest institutional stage, the bill seeks to prevent the normalization of hereditary politics at the grassroots.

Beyond constitutional design, contemporary study likewise underscores the tangible costs of unchecked political dynasties. Recent empirical research demonstrates that "entrenched family rule is associated with weaker institutions, higher corruption risks, distorted allocation of public resources, and persistent

¹ Belgica, et al. v. Ochoa, et al. G.R. No. 208566 November 19, 2013.

economic inequality, outcomes that undermine sustainable development and inclusive growth.”²

Public office is a public trust. By transforming constitutional aspiration into enforceable law, this measure seeks to broaden genuine electoral choice, dismantle structural barriers to political participation, and foster a system where leadership is determined by competence, integrity, and the free will of the electorate, rather than by bloodline.

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



BIENVENIDO M. ABANTE, JR.

² Hariyati et al. "The Hidden Costs of Political Dynasties: Governance, Corruption, and Economic Inequality in the Context of SDGs." *Journal of Lifestyle and SDGs Review* (2025). <https://doi.org/10.47172/2965-730x.sdgsreview.v5.n03.pe05592>.

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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 “**Anti-Political Dynasty Act of 2026.**”

SEC 2. Declaration of Policy. — It is the policy of the State to guarantee equal access to opportunities for public office and to prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law, in accordance with Article II, Section 26 of the 1987 Constitution. The State shall prevent the concentration, consolidation, and perpetuation of political power within families and promote political competition based on merit, integrity, and capability at all levels of government, including the barangay.

SEC 3. Definition of Terms. — For purposes of this Act:

(a) *Political Dynasty* refers to the situation where persons related to one another within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity, regardless of territorial jurisdiction, simultaneously hold, run for, or are positioned to occupy elective public office, whether through regular district elections, local elections, or the party-list system including by being listed as party-list nominee as well as offices in the Sangguniang Kabataan; or where such relatives succeed one another in elective offices over time.

(b) Political Dynasty Relationship exists when:

- (1) *Simultaneous holding or candidacy.* A spouse or relative within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity of an incumbent elective official

- (i) holds an elective public office simultaneously with the incumbent, or
 - (ii) runs for elective public office simultaneously with the incumbent, whether in national elections, local elections, the party-list system, including as a party-list nominee, or SK elections;
 - (2) *Succession over time.* Such spouse or relative succeeds the incumbent elective official in the same elective office or assumes/runs for any other elective public office over time, where the effect is that the relatives occupy elective offices in succession, whether by election, assumption, or other mode of succession; or
 - (3) *Multiple relatives running/positioned to occupy.* Two (2) or more persons who are spouses or relatives within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity simultaneously run for or are positioned to occupy elective public office at the same time, whether through regular district elections, local elections, the party-list system, including by being listed as party-list nominees, or SK elections, regardless of whether their areas of election are the same, overlapping, or wholly different.
- (c) *Relationship by consanguinity* means relationship by blood, including parent-child relationships created by adoption under existing laws.
- (d) *Relationship by affinity* means a relationship created by marriage. For policy purposes in this instrument, it may also include a relationship arising from a de facto union, as defined herein.
- (e) *Incumbent elective official* refers to any person currently holding an elective public office, whether by election or lawful succession, in a permanent or temporary/acting capacity, including officials in national, provincial, city, municipal, barangay, and Sangguniang Kabataan offices, and Members of the House of Representatives elected through the party-list system.
- (f) *Spouse* refers to any of the following, for purposes of determining the existence of a Political Dynasty under paragraph (a):
- (i) *Current legal spouse* — the legal wife or husband in a valid and subsisting marriage; or
 - (ii) *Former legal spouse* — a former wife or husband whose marriage has been dissolved or severed by final judgment of annulment or declaration of nullity, or by a divorce validly obtained and judicially recognized under Philippine law.

For purposes of this Act, the subsequent termination of a marriage or partnership shall not defeat the existence of a political dynasty relationship if the relationship and the relevant holding of office, candidacy, nomination, or succession occurred prior to or during the incumbency or candidacy period contemplated in paragraph (a)

- (g) *De Facto Relationship* – refers to a relationship between two persons who are not legally married to each other, regardless of sex, who cohabit or publicly represent themselves as a couple in a manner akin to spouses or life partners, as shown by their conduct and surrounding circumstances, as may be demonstrated by any of the following indicia:
- (1) Shared residence for a sustained period;
 - (2) Shared child or children;
 - (3) Joint property, shared financial arrangements, or documented pooling of resources;
 - (4) Public representation to the community as partners, including consistent “holding out” as a couple; or
 - (5) Other comparable evidence of a stable partnership, assessed under the totality of circumstances.
- (h) *Running for an Elective Office* -- For purposes of paragraph (a), running for an elective office commences upon the filing of a Certificate of Candidacy (COC) with the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), or upon the commission of any act which, under election law, is treated as the operative step for inclusion as a candidate in the ballot.
- (i) *Holding an Elective Office* — For purposes of paragraph (a), holding an elective office commences upon the proclamation of the winning candidate and the assumption of office, as evidenced by taking the oath and performing the functions of the position, whether permanently or in an acting capacity.
- (j) *Party-List Nominee* — Party-List Nominee refers to any person included in the list of nominees submitted to the COMELEC by a registered party, organization, or coalition pursuant to the Party-List System Act, from which party-list representatives shall be chosen if the party obtains the required number of votes.

- (k) *Running for Party-List Representative* — For purposes of paragraph (a), running for or being positioned to occupy the office of party-list representative commences when a person is included as a nominee in the list submitted by the party-list organization to the COMELEC.
- (l) *Party-List Election* — Party-List Election refers to the election of Members of the House of Representatives through the party-list system under the Party-List System Act.

SEC. 4. *Applicability.* — This Act shall apply prospectively, beginning with the next succeeding regular national and local elections following its effectivity, and to all elections thereafter, including Sangguniang Kabataan elections and participation in the party-list system through nomination and substitution of nominees.

Incumbent elective officials who, at the time of effectivity of this Act, are part of a Political Dynasty as defined in Section 3 (a) may complete their current term. However, while the Political Dynasty relationship exists, no new candidacy, party-list nomination or substitution, assumption, or succession to any elective public office by any spouse or relative within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity as defined in Section 3 (a) shall be allowed if it would create, maintain, or expand the Political Dynasty situation described in Section 3 (a), regardless of territorial jurisdiction.

For purposes of this section, party-list “nomination or substitution” refers to the inclusion, retention, replacement, or reordering of names in a party-list’s list of nominees submitted to the COMELEC.

SEC. 5. *Persons Covered; Prohibited Candidacies, Holding of Office, and Party-List Nomination.* — No person related within the fourth (4th) civil degree of consanguinity or affinity to an incumbent elective official shall be allowed to, during the term of such incumbent:

- (a) File a certificate of candidacy for, run for, or be elected to any elective public office, regardless of territorial jurisdiction, including election through the party-list system and elections for the Sangguniang Kabataan;
- (b) Hold any elective public office, whether by election, succession, assumption by operation of law, or by any other mode, if such holding would result in a Political Dynasty as defined in Section 3 (a);
- (c) Immediately succeed to the office of the incumbent elective official, whether such office is national, provincial, city, municipal, or barangay, including but not limited to Punong Barangay, Barangay Kagawad, Sangguniang Kabataan Chairperson, and Sangguniang Kabataan Members; and

- (d) Be included, retained, or substituted as a party-list nominee of any party, organization, or coalition, or be proclaimed as a party-list representative, when such inclusion, retention, substitution, or proclamation would create or result in a prohibited Political Dynasty relationship under this Act.

Where two (2) or more related persons file certificates of candidacy (or accept party-list nomination) for positions that, if all were given due course, would result in a prohibited Political Dynasty relationship, the certificate of candidacy (or nomination) first filed or first accepted by the party-list organization shall be given due course, and the later filing(s) or nomination(s) shall be denied due course or cancelled, as the case may be.

SEC. 6. *Sworn Statement on Absence of Prohibited Political Dynasty Relationship.* — Every person filing a certificate of candidacy for any elective public office shall submit, together with the certificate of candidacy, a sworn statement declaring that he or she does not have a prohibited Political Dynasty relationship, as defined in this Act, with any incumbent elective official.

The sworn statement shall include the name(s) of the related incumbent elective official(s), if any, and the nature/degree of relationship, for purposes of verification by the Commission on Elections (COMELEC).

SEC. 7. *Petition to Deny Due Course to or Cancel a Certificate of Candidacy; Disqualification of Party-List Nominees.* — Any registered voter, candidate, or duly registered political party, organization, or coalition may file a verified petition to deny due course to or cancel a certificate of candidacy, or to disqualify a party-list nominee, on the ground that the candidate or nominee has a prohibited Political Dynasty relationship under this Act.

For candidates for elective office, the petition shall be filed within the period and in the manner provided for petitions to deny due course to or cancel certificates of candidacy under the Omnibus Election Code and applicable COMELEC rules.

For party-list nominees, the petition shall be filed within the period prescribed by COMELEC rules for challenges to nominee qualifications and/or inclusion, or, if none is provided, not later than proclamation.

SEC. 8. *Summary Proceedings; Period to Decide; Effectivity.* — Petitions under this Act shall be heard summarily by the COMELEC, after due notice and hearing. The COMELEC shall endeavor to resolve the petition within one (1) month from filing.

The COMELEC decision shall become executory after the lapse of five (5) days from receipt by the parties, unless restrained by the Supreme Court.

SEC. 9. *Effect of Finding of Prohibited Political Dynasty Relationship; Election Offense.* — If the COMELEC finds, by final decision, that a candidate's certificate of

candidacy was filed in violation of this Act, the COMELEC shall deny due course to or cancel the certificate of candidacy, as applicable. The candidate shall not be proclaimed, or if already proclaimed, the proclamation may be set aside in accordance with law and jurisprudence.

Violation of this Act or its implementing rules shall constitute an election offense punishable under the Omnibus Election Code, without prejudice to other applicable penalties.

SEC. 10. *Effect if Petition is Unresolved Before Election/Canvass; Suspension of Proclamation; HRET Carve-Out.* — If the petition cannot be finally resolved before election day or before completion of canvass for reasons beyond the control of the COMELEC, the proceedings shall continue. The candidate may be voted for and, if he or she obtains the highest number of votes, may be proclaimed; however, upon motion and when the evidence of violation is strong, the COMELEC may order the suspension of proclamation during the pendency of the case, in accordance with law and jurisprudence.

SEC 11. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* — The COMELEC shall promulgate the implementing rules and regulations within ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act.

SEC 12. *Repealing Clause.* — All laws, decrees, orders, issuances, and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

SEC 13. *Separability Clause.* — If any provision of this Act is declared unconstitutional, the remaining provisions shall remain in full force and effect.

SEC 14. *Effectivity.* — This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,