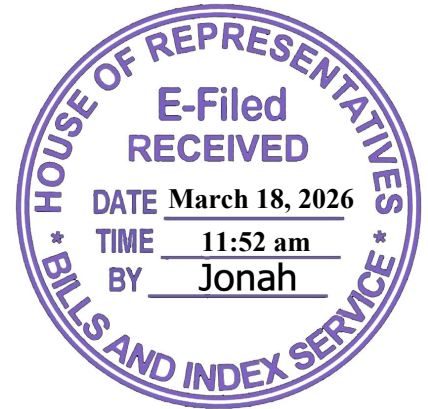


Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 8651



Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

This bill seeks to ensure that representation in the House of Representatives genuinely reflects marginalized and underrepresented sectors it was designed to serve. Article VI, Section 5 of the 1987 Constitution mandates a party-list system to broaden democratic participation, while Article II, Section 26 affirms equal access to public service. These provisions promote inclusive representation and prevent the concentration of political power. However, the current framework has not adequately protected seats intended for those who remain underrepresented.

The Supreme Court has consistently held that the party-list system acts as a social justice tool intended to level the political playing field. Yet, vague eligibility requirements have allowed organizations with established constituencies and substantial resources to compete against genuine sectoral groups.

This bill refines the definition of marginalized and underrepresented sectors and by requiring that party-list organizations and their nominees genuinely belong to and represent these sectors. Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the "*Party-List System Act*", lacks precise and enforceable standards to ensure authentic sectoral representation. This proposed measure strengthens those standards and reinforces the authority of the Commission on Elections to refuse or cancel registration in cases of misrepresentation or noncompliance, subject to due process.

These reforms align the law with constitutional intent and reinforce the integrity of sectoral representation. It also reaffirms the State's commitment to a truly inclusive democracy where those at the margins have a direct voice in shaping national policy.

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


HON. ERIC G. YAP

Republic of the Philippines
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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TWENTIETH CONGRESS
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HOUSE BILL NO. 8651

Introduced by **Representative ERIC G. YAP**

AN ACT
REFORMING THE PARTY-LIST SYSTEM, AMENDING REPUBLIC ACT NO. 7941, 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. Section 5 of Republic Act No. 7941, otherwise known as the "*Party-List System Act*", is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 5. *Registration.* - Any [organized group of persons may register as a] **POLITICAL party, SECTOR, organization or coalition, WHETHER NATIONAL, REGIONAL, OR SECTORAL, MAY REGISTER** for purposes of the party-list system, [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 labor, peasant, fisherfolk, urban poor, indigenous cultural communities, elderly, handicapped, women, youth, veterans, overseas workers,] **THEY MUST REPRESENT THE MARGINALIZED and [professionals] 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 SHALL BELONG TO THE MARGINALIZED AND UNDERREPRESENTED SECTORS IT SEEK TO REPRESENT.

x x x."

SEC. 2. Section 6 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

"Sec. 6. [Removal] REFUSAL and/or Cancellation of Registration. – The COMELEC may, motu proprio or upon verified complaint of any interested party, [remove] **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:

"x x x

"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 percentum (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 THE 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."

SEC. 3. Section 9 of the same Act is hereby amended to read as follows:

“Sec. 9. Qualification 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.

“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 [shall be allowed to] MAY continue IN OFFICE until the expiration of his term.”

SEC. 4. *Separability Clause.* – If any provision of this Act is held invalid or unconstitutional, the other provisions not so declared shall remain in force and effect.

SEC. 5. *Repealing Clause.* – All laws, decrees, orders and rules, and regulations contrary to or inconsistent with the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

SEC. 6. *Effectivity.* – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,