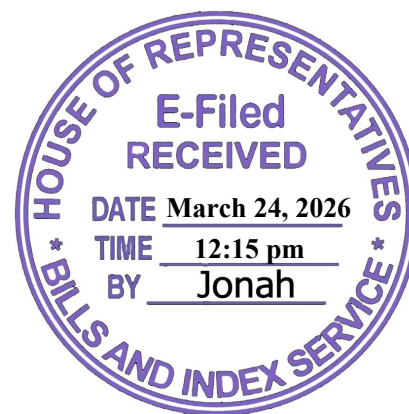


Republic of the Philippines  
**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**  
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS  
First Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. **8737**



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Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “Atty. Nat” M. ODUCAO**

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### **EXPLANATORY NOTE**

Article II, Sec. 23 and Art. XIII, Sec. 15 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution affirm the people’s right to participate in governance. These provisions recognize the vital role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), People’s Organizations (POs), and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) as partners of the State in nation-building. They also affirm that democratic governance flourishes when the voice of citizens is heard, when their organizations are allowed to grow, and when local institutions open their doors to genuine participation.

In practice, however, citizen participation has often been limited to consultation without clear structures for sustained engagement. Mechanisms for organized involvement remain fragmented, and partnerships between local government units (LGUs) and civil society are not always institutionalized. This gap weakens the capacity of communities to contribute to policy-making and oversight in matters that directly affect them.

This proposed measure seeks to bridge that gap. It establishes a framework for the registration and accreditation of CSOs and Pos at the local level, ensuring that their presence is both recognized and safeguarded. It grants them the rights and privileges necessary to take part meaningfully in governance – whether in shaping policies, implementing programs, or monitoring projects.

At the heart of this bill is the creation of Local People’s Councils, bodies designed to give organized citizens a permanent seat at the table of local governance. By amending the composition of local boards, councils, and committees, the measure secures representation for People’s Organizations and strengthens the system of checks and balances at the local level.

This bill also places safeguards against partisanship. It ensures that People’s Councils remain independent from political influence, thereby preserving their integrity and keeping their focus on the welfare of communities rather than the interest of parties or candidates.

Through this Act, citizen participation will no longer be confined to symbolic consultation but will be woven into the very fabric of local governance. It will strengthen accountability, enhance transparency, and foster inclusive development – so that governance is not merely exercised for the people, but carried out with them

<sup>1</sup> Philippine Statistics Authority (2025) Highlights of the Compendium of Philippine Environment Statistics Component 4: Extreme Events and Disasters. Available at <https://psa.gov.ph/content/compendium-philippine-environment-statistics-2015-2024-component-4-extreme-events-and> (last accessed September 22, 2025)

<sup>2</sup> Business World (2024) World Risk Index 2024: Philippines still the most at-risk country for 16<sup>th</sup> straight year. Available at <https://www.bworldonline.com/infographics/2024/09/10/620250/world-risk-index-2024-philippines-still-the-most-at-risk-country-for-16th-straight-year/> (last accessed September 22, 2025)

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'N. Oducado', with a small blue circular stamp or mark near the end of the signature.

**REP. NATHANIEL “ATTY. NAT” M. ODUCADO**  
1Tahanan Party List

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HOUSE BILL NO. **8737**

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Introduced by **REP. NATHANIEL “ATTY. NAT” M. ODUCAO**

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**AN ACT CREATING A SYSTEM OF PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH THE  
ESTABLISHMENT OF A PEOPLE’S COUNCIL IN EVERY LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT UNIT, PRESCRIBING ITS POWERS AND FUNCTIONS**

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

1           **SECTION 1. *Short Title.*** – This Act shall be known as the “*People Empowerment Act.*”

2           **SEC. 2. *Declaration of Policy.*** – It is the policy of the State to ensure participation of  
3 citizens in all avenues of local governance. Likewise, the State acknowledges the value of creating  
4 a mechanism where its citizen’s views and opinions in different areas of governance may be heard  
5 and considered. Furthermore, pursuant to Article II, Section 23 of the Constitution, the State  
6 recognizes the value of non-governmental, community-based, or sectoral organizations in nation  
7 building and creating an avenue to ensure their growth and development. The State also recognizes  
8 that partnerships with People’s Organizations and Civil Society Organizations will spur  
9 development in local government units (LGUs) as envisioned by the Local Government Code of  
10 1991.

11           **SEC. 3. *Definition of Terms.*** – For purposes of this Act:

- 12           a) *Civil Society Organization* or CSO - refers to any organized citizens’ group  
13 including People’s Organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)  
14 such as community groups, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable  
15 organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and  
16 foundations;  
17           b) *Local Sanggunian* - refers to the applicable local legislative body, specifically  
18 either the Sangguniang Panglungsod for cities or the Sangguniang Bayan for  
19 municipalities;  
20           c) *People’s Organization* or PO refers to a bona fide cooperative or association of  
21 citizens organized for purposes not contrary to law with demonstrated capacity to  
22 promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and

1 structure with none of its officers and members occupying elective government  
2 positions.

3 **SEC. 4. *Registration of CSOs.*** – Any CSO in active operation for at least one year may be  
4 registered in their respective city or municipality where they conduct their operations and  
5 where majority of their members reside. Registration will be approved by the Local  
6 Sanggunian, upon submission or compliance of the following requirements:

- 7 a) Proof of existence and operation in the city or municipality they are applying in for  
8 at least one year prior to filing the application for registration;  
9 b) Proof of activities held in pursuit of development objectives or of organizational  
10 activities concluded;  
11 c) Program of activities planned for one year following the date of application for  
12 registration;  
13 d) Copies of its constitution, by-laws and/or articles of incorporation;  
14 e) Lists of its officers and members in good standing and their respective addresses;  
15 f) Financial statements and declaration to register and participate under the Act.

16 A CSO whose application for registration has been approved shall be issued a certificate  
17 of registration containing, among others, the terms and conditions for the maintenance  
18 of its registered status.

19 The Local Sanggunian, however, may from time to time, and in consultation with the  
20 Local People's Council, impose such other requirements and conditions for registration  
21 as it may deem appropriate to best adhere to the principles of this Act.

22 Any CSO already accredited by the LGU prior to the effectivity of this Act need not  
23 register for purposes of this Act, unless its accreditation has in the meantime been  
24 withdrawn.

25 **SEC. 5. *Registration Deemed Inactive.*** – A registered CSO is required to submit, by  
26 January 31 of every year, a list of accomplishments of the previous year and its plans for the current  
27 year. Any CSO who fails to comply for two (2) consecutive years, shall automatically have its  
28 registration deemed inactive.

29 Any CSO whose registration has been deemed inactive may not avail of the rights and  
30 privileges of registered CSOs contained in Section 7 of this Act. A CSO may reactivate its  
31 registration upon submission of the documents it lacks.

32 **SEC. 6. *Committee on Registration of CSOs.*** – There shall be a Committee on Registration  
33 of CSOs in each Local Sanggunian of all cities and municipalities. It is mandated to perform the  
34 following functions:

- 35 a) Receive and process applications for registration;  
36 b) Monitor compliance with the conditions for registration; and  
37 c) Initiate legislative measures for the effective performance of its tasks.

1 The Local People's Council, once formally organized, shall be entitled to a two-seat  
2 representation in the Committee.

3 **SEC. 7. *Rights and Privileges of Registered CSOs.*** – Registered CSOs may enjoy the  
4 following rights and privileges:

- 5 a) Enter into joint ventures or other forms of undertaking with Local Sanggunian to  
6 engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capacity-building, and livelihood  
7 projects;
- 8 b) Develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversity  
9 agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance  
10 the economic and social well-being of the people within the framework of equitable  
11 and sustainable development;
- 12 c) Receive assistance from the Local Sanggunian for economic, socially-oriented,  
13 environmental, good governance, or cultural projects to be implemented within  
14 their territorial jurisdiction;
- 15 d) Join and become part of the Local People's Council.

16  
17 **SEC. 8. *Creation of Local People's Councils.*** – A Local People's Council, composed of  
18 accredited CSOs, shall be created. For its purpose, the Committee on Registration of each Local  
19 Sanggunian shall, not later than ninety (90) days from the effectivity of this Act, call for a  
20 convention of all accredited CSOs to facilitate the formal organization of the Local People's  
21 Council. Thereafter, such group shall file a petition for recognition with the Local Sanggunian.

22 A Local People's Council shall be formally created upon approval by the Local Sanggunian  
23 of the petition for recognition.

24 **SEC. 9. *Structure and Rules of the Local People's Council.*** – Each Local People's  
25 Council shall determine its own organizational structures and internal rules, but shall at all times  
26 provide for adequate consultation mechanisms for purposes of obtaining the views and suggestions  
27 of all political parties or movements, government employees' organizations, other non-accredited  
28 but legitimate CSOs, and accredited CSOs which are not members of the Council; Provided, that  
29 no political part, government employees' organization or non-registered CSOs may be nominated  
30 by the Council for membership in the LGU's special bodies nor may they be granted the rights and  
31 privileges of accredited CSOs under this Act.

32 **SEC. 10. *Recognition of the Local People's Council by the Local Sanggunian.*** – Only  
33 one Local People's Council shall be recognized by each Local Sanggunian. The Local Sanggunian  
34 is mandated to award recognition to a People's Council within thirty (30) days from the filing of a  
35 petition for recognition.

36 **SEC. 11. *Withdrawing Recognition of the Local People's Council.*** – The Local  
37 Sanggunian may withdraw the recognition granted to the Local People's Council only upon a  
38 verified petition and based on the following grounds: (a) that the Local People's Council has  
39 allowed itself or any of its member organizations to engage primarily in, or to be used primarily  
40 for, partisan political activities; and (b) such other grounds as may be provided in the Implementing

Rules and Regulations of this Act. The Local Sanggunian shall have no jurisdiction over internal and/or inter-organizational conflicts within the Local People's Council.

**SEC. 12. Powers and Responsibilities of the Local People's Council.** – Upon recognition, the Local People's Council may, in accordance with its policies and internal rules, exercise the following powers and responsibilities:

- a) Elect or appoint, from among its member organizations, its representatives to all LGU bodies, boards, councils, committees, task forces special government bodies and other similar work groups which the laws may hereinafter create. Member organizations elected or appointed to represent the Local People's Council shall have the sole prerogative to choose from among their bona fide members, the persons who shall sit in the boards, councils, committees, task forces and/or special bodies concerned. Unless otherwise provided herein, such representatives shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the membership of the board, council, committee, task force or special body;
- b) Participation of the Local People's Council or any of its member organization in the conception, implementation and evaluation of government activities and functions shall be without compensation or remuneration. The LGU, however, shall provide for the necessary office spaces, facilities and/or equipment for said participation of the Council;
- c) Representatives of the Local People's Council may observe, vote and participate in the deliberation, conceptualization, implementation and evaluation of projects, activities and programs of the LGU, propose legislations and participate and vote at the committee level of the Local Sanggunian;
- d) The Local People's Council shall also elect a representative for the provincial level.

**SEC. 13. Creation of a Provincial People's Council.** – A Provincial People's Council shall be created and recognized by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan. The Provincial People's Council shall be composed of all representatives to the provincial level from the Local People's Councils within the province's jurisdiction.

The Provincial People's Council shall elect, from within its ranks, a representative who will sit on the Sanggunian Panlalawigan and shall exercise the duties and powers of a Provincial Board member.

**SEC. 14. Non-Partisan Nature of the Local and Provincial People's Council.** – The Local or Provincial People's Council shall not engage in, or allow itself or its member organizations to be used for purposes of partisan politics and shall adopt such measures to ensure that it is adequately shielded from any political partisanship or influence.

For purposes of this Act, partisan politics shall refer to any activity statement or manifestation which solely or primarily serves to campaign for or against any particular political party or any candidates for any elective public office.

1       **SEC. 15. *Amendment of the Composition of LGUs.*** – The existing composition of the  
2 committees, boards, councils, task forces, special bodies of all LGUs are hereby amended and  
3 modified to accommodate the membership and participation therein of the Local People’s Council  
4 or its representatives as herein mandated.

5       **SEC. 16. *Right to Self-Organization.*** – Pursuant to Article XIII, Section 15 of the  
6 Constitution, CSOs are recognized as independent and autonomous self-help organizations. They  
7 are encouraged to organize into formal cooperatives, labor union, interest groups, non-government  
8 organizations, sectoral organizations and/or people’s organization in furtherance of their  
9 constitutionally mandated role of enabling the people to pursue and protect, within the democratic  
10 framework, their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful  
11 means.

12       Furthermore, the Department of Local and Interior Governance (DILG) and LGUs are  
13 mandated to assist, and support efforts of the people towards self-organization to address their  
14 common concerns, to promote their common welfare, and/or to serve their localities or their  
15 communities and interests

16       **SEC. 17. *Funding.*** – The funds needed for the capacity building of CSOs shall be included  
17 in the annual budget of the DILG. The funds needed for the capacity building of CSOs shall be  
18 included in the annual budget of the DILG. The funds necessary for the maintenance and  
19 operational expenses of Local People’s Council, in relation to participation in local governance,  
20 shall be included in the annual budgets of respective LGUs.

21       **SEC. 18. *Information Boards and Suggestion Boxes.*** – Information boards and suggestion  
22 boxes shall be provided, maintained and controlled by the LGU in each barangay, at the public  
23 plazas, city hall compound, public markets, schools, government offices, and at such public places  
24 accessible to the people, which boards and boxes shall be other than those maintained by the  
25 barangays and the national government, and shall be controlled solely by the LGU.

26       LGUs are mandated to respond within fifteen (15) working days to the suggestions filed by  
27 citizens filed by citizens in suggestion boxes.

28       **SEC. 19. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.*** – Within one hundred twenty (120) days  
29 from the effectivity of this Act, the DILG, LGUs, in consultation with CSOs that have experience  
30 working with LGUs, shall determine effective ways and methods for the implementation of this  
31 Act and craft the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

32       **SEC. 20. *Separability Clause.*** – If any provision of this Act is declared invalid or  
33 unconstitutional, the other provisions not affected by such declaration shall remain in full force and  
34 effect.

35       **SEC. 21. *Repealing Clause.*** – All laws, executive orders, administrative orders, and rules  
36 and regulations inconsistent with this Act are hereby repealed or amended accordingly.

37       **SEC. 22. *Effectivity Clause.*** – This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete  
38 publication in the *Official Gazette* or in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

1      *Approved,*