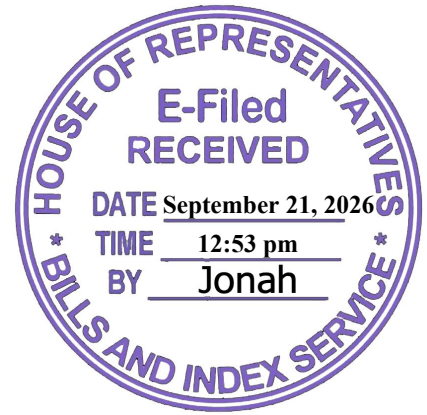


Republic of the Philippines
House of Representatives
Quezon City, Metro Manila

TWENTIETH CONGRESS
Second Regular Session

House Bill No. 11394



INTRODUCED BY REP. PATRICK MICHAEL “PM” D. VARGAS

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

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Democratic governance is strengthened when citizens are given meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions that directly affect their communities. Civil society organizations—including people’s organizations, non-government organizations, labor groups, community organizations, professional associations, foundations, and other organized citizens—provide valuable knowledge, experience, and perspectives that can help the government identify local needs and develop more responsive policies. The proposed measure recognizes CSOs as partners in local governance and seeks to create a formal system through which their participation can become more consistent, organized, and effective. It defines CSOs and people’s organizations and establishes a registration system for qualified organizations operating within cities and municipalities.

The bill proposes the establishment of a Local People’s Council in every local government unit, composed of accredited CSOs, to provide an institutional mechanism for citizen participation in local governance. Registered CSOs would be able to participate in joint undertakings with local governments involving basic services, capacity-building, livelihood, economic, environmental, cultural, and good-governance projects. The measure also provides for a convention of accredited CSOs to facilitate the organization of the Local People’s Council and

requires the local *Sanggunian* to recognize the Council upon compliance with the prescribed requirements.

The proposed People's Councils are intended to give organized citizens a substantive role in the formulation and implementation of local policies and programs. Upon recognition, the Councils may elect or appoint representatives to LGU boards, councils, committees, task forces, and other special bodies; observe and participate in government deliberations; vote where authorized; evaluate government projects and activities; and propose legislation. The bill likewise provides for representation at the provincial level, thereby creating a mechanism through which community-level concerns can be elevated into broader local policy discussions.¹ This framework builds upon Article XIII, Section 15 of the Constitution, which recognizes the role of independent and autonomous people's organizations in enabling citizens to pursue and protect their legitimate and collective interests and aspirations through peaceful and lawful means.

Meaningful participation, however, requires both institutional channels and practical means for citizens to communicate with the government. The bill therefore directs LGUs to provide the necessary facilities for the participation of People's Councils, requires funding for CSO capacity-building and Council operations, and establishes information boards and suggestion boxes in accessible public places, with LGUs required to respond to suggestions within fifteen working days.

By institutionalizing these mechanisms, the measure seeks to transform citizen participation from an occasional exercise into a continuing partnership between communities and local governments, promoting greater transparency, responsiveness, accountability, and public ownership of local development.

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


REP. PATRICK MICHAEL "PM" D. VARGAS
Fifth District of Quezon City

¹ 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines, Art. XIII, Sec. 15.

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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 “*People’s Partnership in Governance Act.*”

SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State to recognize and strengthen the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) and people’s organizations as essential partners in democratic governance and local development, and to institutionalize meaningful, inclusive, and accountable mechanisms for their participation in local decision-making.

The State shall promote the right of citizens to organize and collectively pursue their legitimate interests, facilitate constructive partnerships between CSOs and local government units (LGUs), and ensure that people’s participation extends beyond consultation to the conception, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of government programs, projects, and policies, consistent with the constitutional recognition of the role of people’s organizations in enabling citizens to pursue and protect their legitimate and collective interests.

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

1. *Civil Society Organization or CSO* – refers to any organized citizens' group including People's Organizations and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) such as community groups, labor unions, indigenous groups, charitable organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, and foundations;
2. *Local Sanggunian* – refers to the applicable local legislative body, specifically either the Sangguniang Panglungsod for cities or the Sangguniang Bayan for municipalities;
3. *People's Organization or PO* – refers to a bona fide cooperative or association of citizens organized for purposes not contrary to law with demonstrated capacity to promote the public interest and with identifiable leadership, membership, and structure with none of its officers and members occupying elective government positions.

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

1. Proof of existence and operation in the city or municipality they are applying in for at least one year prior to filing the application for registration;
2. Proof of activities held in pursuit of development objectives or of organizational activities concluded;
3. Program of activities planned for one year following the date of application for registration;
4. Copies of its constitution, by-laws and/or articles of incorporation;
5. Lists of its officers and members in good standing and their respective addresses;
6. Financial statements and declaration to register and participate under the Act.

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

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

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

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

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

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

1. Receive and process applications for registration;
2. Monitor compliance with the conditions for registration; and
3. Initiate legislative measures for the effective performance of its tasks.

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

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

1. Enter into joint ventures or other forms of undertaking with Local Sanggunian to engage in the delivery of certain basic services, capacity-building, and livelihood projects;
2. Develop local enterprises designed to improve productivity and income, diversify agriculture, spur rural industrialization, promote ecological balance, and enhance the economic and social well-being of the people within the framework of equitable and sustainable development;
3. Receive assistance from the Local Sanggunian for economic, socially-oriented, environmental, good governance, or cultural projects to be implemented within their territorial jurisdiction;
4. Join and become part of the Local People's Council.

SECTION 8. *Creation of Local People's Councils.* – A Local People's Council, composed of accredited CSOs, shall be created. For its purpose, the Committee on Registration of each Local Sanggunian shall, not later than ninety (90) days

from the effectivity of this Act, call for a convention of all accredited CSOs to facilitate the formal organization of the Local People's Council. Thereafter, such group shall file a petition for recognition with the Local Sanggunian.

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

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

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

SECTION 11. *Withdrawing Recognition of the Local People's Council.* – The Local Sanggunian may withdraw the recognition granted to the Local People's Council only upon a verified petition and based on the following grounds: (a) that the Local People's Council has allowed itself or any of its member organizations to engage primarily in, or to be used primarily 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.

SECTION 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:

1. 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;

2. Participation of the Local People's Council or any of its member organizations 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;
3. 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 legislation and participate and vote at the committee level of the Local Sanggunian;
4. The Local People's Council shall also elect a representative for the provincial level.

SECTION 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.

SECTION 14. *Amendment of the Composition of LGUs.* – The existing composition of the committees, boards, councils, task forces, and special bodies of all LGUs is hereby amended and modified to accommodate the membership and participation therein of the Local People's Council or its representatives as herein mandated.

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

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

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

SECTION 17. *Information Boards and Suggestion Boxes.* – Information boards and suggestion boxes shall be provided, maintained, and controlled by the LGU in each barangay, at the public plazas, city hall compound, public markets, schools, government offices, and at such public places accessible to the people, which boards and boxes shall be other than those maintained by the barangays and the national government, and shall be controlled solely by the LGU.

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

SECTION 18. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* – Within one hundred twenty (120) days from the effectivity of this Act, the DILG, LGUs, in consultation with CSOs that have experience working with LGUs, shall determine effective ways and methods for the implementation of this Act and craft the implementing rules and regulations of this Act.

SECTION 19. *Repeal.* All orders, issuances, rules and regulations or parts thereof that are contrary to, or inconsistent with, the provisions of this Act are hereby repealed, modified or amended accordingly. This Act is consistent with and shall not supplant the other streamlining initiatives of the government covered by previously issued executive orders.

SECTION 20. *Effectivity.* Notwithstanding the non-issuance of the IRR, this Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

Approved,