

[TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE]

**A
Bill**

*further to amend the National Commission on the Status of Women Act,
2012*

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012 (VIII of 2012) for the purposes hereinafter appearing;

It is hereby enacted as follows: -

1. Short title and commencement. - (1) This Act may be called the National Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Act, 2025.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 3, Act VIII of 2012.- In the National Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2012 (VIII of 2012), hereinafter referred to as the said Act, in sub-section (2), in section 3, for paragraphs (a) and (b), the following shall be substituted, namely:-

"(a) a Chairperson, who shall possess the following qualifications:

- (i) must be a woman and born citizen of Pakistan;
- (ii) who has been, or is qualified to be a judge of the Supreme Court or High Court having knowledge and experience of Human rights;
- (iii) must not have been a candidate for an elected position immediately preceding her appointment; and
- (iv) must not have been a member of any political party for the last ten years preceding her appointment.

(b) two members from each Province, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit Baltistan and Islamabad Capital Territory having the following qualifications:

- (i) must be a natural born citizen of Pakistan;
- (ii) must be a member of the Pakistan Bar Council or qualified to be a member of Pakistan Bar Council preceding his / her appointment;
- (iii) for non-lawyers, must have at least ten years of professional experience in human rights cases;
- (iv) must not have been candidate for an elected position immediately preceding his/her appointment; and
- (v) must not have been a member of any political party for the last ten years preceding his / her appointment:

Provided that at least half of these members shall be women."

3. Amendment of section 6, Act VIII of 2012.- In the said Act, in, in section 6, in sub-section (1), for the expression "The term of the office may be extended only once.", the expression "The person appointed as Chairperson or a Member shall not be re-appointed.", shall be substituted.

4. Amendment of section 10, Act VIII of 2012.- In the said Act, in section 10, sub-sections (3) and (4), shall be omitted.

5. Insertion of new section 10A, Act VIII of 2012.- In the said Act, after section 10, amended as aforesaid, the following new section shall be added, namely:-

"10A.- Appointment of Officers and Employees of the Secretariat. - The Commission may, under this Act, through advertisement in national newspapers and after following a due process, appoint such officers and employees as it considers necessary for the efficient performance of its functions:

Provided that there shall be no appointment of any officer or employee on deputation from any Government department."

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

If the National Commission on the Status of Women is to truly protect and promote women's rights in our country, then changes must be made to enable it to become more effective institution. In this regard there is a need to make the appointment procedures more transparent and effective. As non-judicial member positions are increasingly being filled by ex-bureaucrats, credence is given to the contention that commission is more an extension of the government, rather than independent agency exercising oversight. If commission is to play a meaningful role in society, it must include members possessing qualifications and experience particularly in Human Rights including women's rights cases along with a sound legal background. Besides, the National Commission on the Status of Women needs to develop an independent cadre of staff with appropriate experience. The present arrangement of having to rely on those on deputation from different Government departments is not satisfactory as experience has shown that most have little knowledge and understanding of the women's rights issues. This problem can be rectified by employing specially recruited and qualified staff to help clear the heavy inflow of complaints.

The Bill has been designed to achieve the aforementioned purpose.

SENATOR SAMINA MUMTAZ ZEHRI
MEMBER IN CHARGE