

[TO BE INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE]

A

BILL

further to amend the Elections Act, 2017

WHEREAS it is expedient further to amend the Elections Act, 2017 (XXXIII of 2017) to strengthen the political participation and representation of women, non-Muslims, and persons with disabilities in Pakistan;

It is hereby enacted as follows:—

1. Short title and commencement.—(1) This Act shall be called the Elections (Amendment) Act, 2026.

(2) It shall come into force at once.

2. Amendment of section 59, Act XXXIII of 2017.— In the Elections Act, 2017 (XXXIII of 2017), hereinafter referred to as the said Act, in section 59, after sub-section (2), the following new sub-sections shall be inserted, namely:—

“(2A) The Commission shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities, including provision of ramps, sign language support, Braille ballot papers and priority voting facilities.

(2B) The Commission shall provide women-only polling booths in every constituency where required for ensuring safe participation of women voters.”

3. Insertion of new section 91A, Act XXXIII of 2017.— (1) In the said Act, after section 91, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:—

“91A. Accessibility and voter facilitation.—(1) The Commission shall maintain a database of voters with disabilities to facilitate provision of transport, accessible polling material and priority voting.

(2) Persons with disabilities shall be entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choice for assistance in casting their vote.”

4. Amendment of section 202, Act XXXIII of 2017.— In the said Act, in section 202, after sub-section (2), the following new sub-sections shall be inserted, namely:—

“(2A) Every political party applying for enlistment shall submit a certified copy of its constitution clearly providing that—

- (a) women shall constitute not less than thirty-three per cent of members of all elected and non-elected bodies at every tier of the party structure;
- (b) inclusion plans for non-Muslims and persons with disabilities are established within party structures, with annual progress reports filed before the Commission; and
- (c) a mechanism exists for resolution of discrimination-related complaints within sixty days.

(2B) The Commission shall determine compliance with sub-section (2A) within ninety days of submission.”

5. Substitution of section 206, Act XXXIII of 2017.— In the said Act, for section 206, the following shall be substituted, namely:—

“206. Party lists for reserved seats.— (1) Every political party shall submit separate priority lists for women, and non-Muslims for reserved seats in the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies in accordance with the Constitution, and shall maintain an internal priority list for persons with disabilities for party record and compliance purposes.

(2) The Commission shall ensure that allocation of reserved seats reflects the proportional representation of the political party based on general seats secured in the relevant Assembly.

(3) Non-compliance with the requirements of this section shall render the priority list incomplete and liable to rejection.”

6. Insertion of new section 206A, Act XXXIII of 2017.—In the said Act, after section 206, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:—

"206A. Compliance monitoring.— (1) The Commission shall monitor compliance of political parties with inclusion requirements relating to women, non-Muslims and persons with disabilities.

(2) The Commission shall publish annual compliance reports."

(3) Persistent non-compliance may render the political party liable to action under section 215."

7. Amendment of section 207, Act XXXIII of 2017.—In the said Act, in section 207, after sub-section (2), the following new sub-section shall be inserted, namely:—

"(3) Every political party shall ensure that at least thirty-three per cent of the total office bearers at the federal, provincial and district levels are women."

8. Amendment of section 208, Act XXXIII of 2017.—In the said Act, in section 208, after sub-section (2), the following new sub-sections shall be inserted, namely:—

"(2A) Internal party elections shall be conducted through secret ballot under the supervision of an accredited independent election authority approved by the Commission.

(2B) Not less than thirty-three percent of all positions filled through internal elections shall be reserved for women, with proportional allocation for non-Muslims and persons with disabilities, in accordance with rules prescribed by the Commission.

(2C) The Commission shall publish certified results of intra-party elections within thirty days of their conclusion.

(2D) Any political party failing to conduct intra-party elections in accordance with this section shall be ineligible for allocation of an election symbol in the subsequent general elections."

9. Amendment of section 234, Act XXXIII of 2017.—In the Elections Act, 2017, in section 234, after sub-section (3), the following new sub-section shall be added, namely:—

"(3A) The Code of Conduct shall require political parties to allocate at least ten percent of party funds for political training, leadership development and election awareness programmes targeted towards women, non-Muslims and persons with disabilities."

10. Insertion of new section 240A, Act XXXIII of 2017.—In the said Act, after section 240, the following new section shall be inserted, namely:—

"240A. Savings.—All actions taken or orders made under the Elections Act, 2017 prior to the commencement of this Act shall continue to remain valid unless inconsistent with the provisions of this amendment."

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

The purpose of the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2025 is to strengthen the inclusiveness, transparency and representativeness of Pakistan's electoral and political systems by introducing amendments to the Elections Act, 2017 that enhance accessibility for voters, reinforce intra-party democracy and improve compliance with statutory obligations. The proposed amendments seek to ensure greater participation of women, non-Muslims and persons with disabilities in political processes by requiring political parties to adopt internal inclusion mechanisms, maintain transparent procedures for intra-party elections and adhere to enhanced monitoring standards during election campaigns.

The Bill further aims to provide a more facilitative voting environment for persons with disabilities through measures related to polling station accessibility and voter assistance. These reforms do not alter the constitutional framework of reserved seats but strengthen administrative and regulatory practices within the mandate of the Election Commission of Pakistan. By harmonizing party-level obligations, electoral procedures and campaign conduct with constitutional principles and international best practices, this Bill seeks to advance a more equitable, participatory and accountable democratic system in Pakistan.

**SENATOR DR. ZARQA SUHARWARDY TAIMUR
MEMBER-IN-CHARGE**