

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

A BILL ENTITLED

AN ACT to further amend the Local Government Act to remove the restriction on nominated members of a Council to vote at Council meetings whilst maintaining that restriction in the case of selected members, and for connected matters.

ENACTED by the President and the National Assembly.

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1. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Local Government (Amendment) Act, 2024.

2. Amendment of Cap. 33:01

The Local Government Act (hereafter referred to as the “Principal Act”) is further amended as set out in this Act.

3. Amendment of section 28

Section 28 of the Principal Act is amended in sub-section (3) by substituting for it the following –

“(3) Selected members of the Council shall not have the right to vote at Council meetings.”

OBJECTS AND REASONS

This Bill seeks to give nominated councillors voting rights as opposed to the 2002 Local Government Act to ensure that the interests of all Gambians are represented in the local government. Nominated councillors are nominated by the mayors and chairpersons in concurrence with the minister to represent groups that may not be adequately represented through the electoral process, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities. Giving them voting rights would ensure that their voices are heard and their needs are considered in decision making. It would also promote democracy and good governance. Democratic institutions are based on the principle of popular participation. Giving nominated councillors voting rights would allow them to participate fully in the democratic process and hold the elected councillors accountable.

Moreover, it would improve the quality of local government decision making. Nominated councillors often have expertise in specific areas, such as education, health, and social welfare. Giving them voting rights would allow them to contribute their knowledge and skills to the decision-making process, which would lead to better outcomes for all Gambians. For example, a nominated councillor who is a women's rights activist could use her voting rights to advocate for policies that benefit young people, and a nominated councillor who is a person with disability could use his or her voting rights to equally advocate for policies that make local government services more accessible to people with disabilities.

Finally, giving nominated councillors voting rights would be a positive step towards promoting democracy, good governance, and the interest of all Gambians.

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HON. YAHYA MENTENG SANYANG
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBER FOR LATRIKUNDA SABIJI