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OF THE PHILIPPINES)
First Regular Session)

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Introduced by Representative Herminio Harry L. Roque Jr.

**AN ACT
DEFINING AND PROHIBITING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
POLITICAL DYNASTIES**

EXPLANATORY NOTE

The Constitution, Article 2, Section 26 provides:

The State shall guarantee equal access to opportunities for public service and prohibit political dynasties as may be defined by law.

Our Constitution was ratified in 1987. It is now 26 years since we ratified the Constitution. But during this entire time of more than two decades, Congress has failed to comply with its constitutional duty to pass a law defining and prohibiting political dynasties. Self-interest naturally ensures that members of Congress who will be adversely affected by any political dynasty law will vote and actively campaign against it.

The Constitutional Commission of 1986 failed to respond to a problem it had already recognized. Instead of directly dealing with the problem by creating rules to remedy the situation, it left the matter to an institution, the Congress, many of whose members suffer from a conflict of interest on the subject of political dynasties.

Today, the Philippines is now conceivably the world capital of political dynasties. The result of 26 years of deliberate inaction by legislators is that based on

the 2010 elections, today there are 178 dominant political dynasties. At the House of Representatives, 74 percent or 170 representatives belong to political families. In the Senate, 80 percent or 18 of the current 23 senators are members of political families. In the party-list system, 91 percent or 52 seats are held by millionaires and multimillionaires.

The Philippines has 80 provinces. Of these, 94 percent, meaning 73 out of 80, have political dynasties. In every province, there are at least two political families.

The Constitution regards political dynasties as evil, because in effect they constitute a monopoly of political power inside a democracy, the Constitution of which explicitly provides that every qualified Filipino should have an equal opportunity for public service.

And yet, political dynasties who have ruled for more than 30 years include 6 families. Political dynasties who have ruled for more than 20 years include at least 61 families. On the other hand, political dynasties who have ruled 12 to 18 years include 53 political families.

Political dynasty is anathema in a democracy, because in one geographical area, one family controls power, corruption, the military, the police, and illegal activities such as illegal gambling, drug smuggling, gun smuggling, and smuggling of various other objects banned by law. In this manner, political dynasties have become invulnerable and constitute an open defiance of our Constitution, thus blatantly undermining the rule of law.

Political dynasties are both results and manifestations of our failure to reform the electoral system, inability to create a sizable educated middle class, and the

continuing success of the politics of personality. Political dynasties are also problematic for our democracy because they effectively disqualify otherwise highly qualified prospective public officers, create more opportunities for corruption, and generate cynicism about public service.

Admittedly, it is very difficult and complicated to provide a definition of political dynasty. But we can define political dynasty by specifying the situation. The bill imposes a prohibition on relatives within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity. On the local level, this bill prohibits such relatives from running for public office at the same time, within the same province, city or municipality. The bill also covers situations where relatives occupy national positions such as the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Philippines. Concentration of political power today is no longer just local, but also national, most likely because of the greater efficiency and nationalized impact of various systems of information dissemination.

The bill also covers situations where two or more persons who are spouses or are related within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity run simultaneously for elective local or national public office within the same province, city or municipality, or same local or national office, even if neither is so related to an incumbent elective local or national official.

This strategy of identifying situations indicative of the existence of political dynasties is better than the more difficult task of defining political dynasties. Under this bill, all we need to show is the presence of a relationship between candidates and incumbents in order to seek their disqualification. We therefore only have to identify who among the candidates and incumbents are related within the prohibited degree of

affinity and consanguinity to be able to enforce the anti-dynasty principle of our Constitution.

The bill operates by allowing petitions for disqualification to be filed before the Comelec whenever such prohibited situations are identified.¹



HERMINIO HARRY L. ROQUE JR.

¹ This bill was originally filed during the Thirteenth Congress, First Regular Session.

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H. B. No. ~~911~~

Introduced by Representative Herminio Harry L. Roque Jr.

1 AN ACT
2 DEFINING AND PROHIBITING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF
3 POLITICAL DYNASTIES

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

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* – This Act shall be known as “The Anti-Political
5 Dynasty Act.”

6 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* – It is hereby declared the policy of the State
7 to guarantee equal access and opportunity to public office and public service. Towards
8 this end, it is likewise declared the policy of the State to prohibit political dynasties as
9 defined in Section 3 of this Act.

10 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* – As used in this Act, the term:

11 (a) “National office” shall refer to the Senate of the Philippines or the House of
12 Representatives.

13 (b) “Political dynasty” shall exist when a person who is the spouse or relative
14 within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity of an incumbent
15 elective local or national official holds or runs for an elective office
16 simultaneously with the incumbent local or national elective official within the
17 same province, city or municipality or occupies the same local or national
18 office immediately after the term of office of the incumbent local or national
19 elective official.

1 Political dynasty shall also be deemed to exist where two (2) or more persons who
2 are spouses or are related within the second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity run
3 simultaneously for elective local or national public office within the same province, city
4 or municipality, or same local or national office, even if neither is so related to an
5 incumbent elective local or national official.

6 (b) "Spouse" shall refer to the legal and common-law wife or husband of an
7 incumbent elective official;

8 (c) "Second civil degree of consanguinity or affinity" shall refer to the relatives of
9 a person who may be the latter's brother or sister, whether of full or half-blood, direct
10 ascendant or direct descendant, whether legitimate, illegitimate or adopted, including
11 their spouses;

12 (d) "Runs for an elective office" shall be deemed to commence upon the filing of
13 the certificate of candidacy by a candidate with the Commissions on Elections;

14 (e) "Holding an elective office" shall be deemed to commence from the moment
15 the public official takes his oath of office; and

16 (f) "COMELEC" shall refer to the Commission on Elections.

17 SECTION 4. *Persons Covered; Prohibited Candidates.* – No spouse or person
18 related within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity, whether legitimate or
19 illegitimate, to an incumbent elective official seeking reelection shall be allowed to hold
20 or run for any elective office within the same province, city or municipality or the same
21 office in the same election. In case the constituency of the incumbent elective official is
22 national in character, the above relatives shall be disqualified from running only within
23 the same province where the former is a registered voter.

24 In case where none of the candidates is related to an incumbent elective official
25 within the second degree of consanguinity or affinity, but are related to one another
26 within the said prohibited degree, they, including their spouses, shall be disqualified from

