

COSATU Submission
Review of the Public Funding of Represented
Political Parties Act, No. 103, 1997
24 July 2017



COSATU

Submitted to:

Ad-Hoc Committee on the
Funding of Political Parties
Parliament
Republic of South Africa

COSATU strongly welcomes Parliament's calling for public submissions on a review of the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act.

COSATU believes that is an important and in fact long overdue call.

COSATU supports the principles of the Act and the provisions it makes for political parties represented in Parliament and the Provincial Legislatures to be provided with reasonable public funding as well as the required accounting principles attached to it.

COSATU like most of South Africa is deeply concerned and alarmed by the ever increasing levels of corruption in both the public and private sectors.

This is a cancer that if left unattended threatens the very fabric of our hard won democracy that so many paid the ultimate sacrifice for.

COSATU therefore proposes that the Act be reviewed with the view to strengthening it.

Its provisions for public funding of political parties should be retained with additional further measures to ensure parties account for public funds received in line with the Public Finance Management Act. Parties which do not account fully for monies received should not be allowed to receive further funds until the existing funds have been accounted for in full.

The Act should be amended to allow for parties to continue receiving private funding. However this must be required to be disclosed and accounted for in full to Parliament, the Provincial Legislatures and the Independent Electoral Commission. Private companies that fund political parties must also be required by the Act to disclose such donations in their annual reports.

Such public and private funding annual reports should be available to the public.

This is critical as there are growing examples of a vicious cycle where business persons seek to bribe parties with funding in exchange for tenders or favourable government policies.

Likewise there are growing cases of politicians demanding bribes or funding in exchange for tenders or favourable access to government leaders or favourable policies.

Historically many political parties objected to such proposals for private funding transparency on the basis of potential intimidation. Whilst there might be a potential for that, however it is of smaller consequence when compared to the rapidly growing crisis of public private sector corruption at all levels of the state.

Furthermore South Africa is a growing, deepening vibrant constitutional multi-party democracy with a robust judiciary. Our courts have not been afraid to rule against governments at all levels as required.

Currently we have 13 parties represented in Parliament. The majority of these parties are represented in the executives of one of the three tiers of government and thus potentially susceptible to conflicts of interest and bribery from private funders.

COSATU hopes that the Ad-Hoc Committee will take its submissions into account during its deliberations.

COSATU would further like to request the chance to make an oral submission if the committee holds public hearings on this critical matter facing the nation.



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