

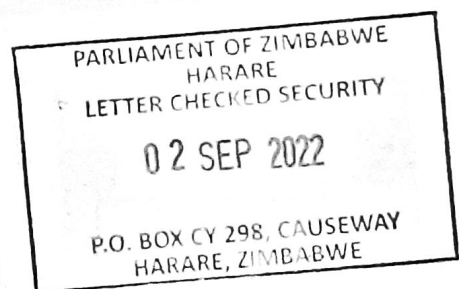
FORM OF PETITION

TO THE HONOURABLE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT,

IN PARLIAMENT

ASSEMBLED

**PRESENTED TO THE SPEAKER OF PARLIAMENT ON 2 SEPTEMBER
2022**



The Petition of the Undersigned:

The **Institute for Young Women's Development (IYWD)** is a feminist organization with proven experience in promoting young women and women's participation and leadership to inform and influence socio-economic and political decision-making. IYWD is committed to mobilizing and strengthening young women and women's (YWW)'s voices and power to challenge injustice and reconstruct alternative societies centered on openness and equality and we are interested in the integrity of electoral processes. The IYWD is housed at 399, Claver Hill Bindura, and can be contacted by telephone on +263 77 248 1273 and by email at youngwomeninstitute@gmail.com. The IYWD is duly registered at law as a Trust.

WHOSE Funding Method is: donor funding from various development partners and organizations supporting women;

Together with young women and women of Zimbabwe, whose signatures are in full support of this petition,

Respectfully shows That Your Petitioners are; Being citizens of Zimbabwe;

TAKING NOTE that every citizen of Zimbabwe has the right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority including the enactment of legislation as set out in section 149 (1) of the Constitution

CONSCIOUS that the Parliament has the power to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution of Zimbabwe are upheld at all times and that all institutions of government at every level act constitutionally and in the national interests as provided by section 119(2) of the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 20) Act, 2013

COGNISANT that Zimbabwe is founded on the principle of gender equality as stipulated by section 3 (1)(g) of the Constitution.

APPRECIATING: that the Parliament of Zimbabwe is enjoined to protect the Constitution and promote democratic governance in Zimbabwe, and in this regard enact relevant laws for the peace, order, and good governance of Zimbabwe;

AWARE: that the right to vote and to be voted for was attained following a protracted and vicious liberation struggle and hence non-negotiable.

RECOGNISING: the provisions of sections 17(right to political participation on the basis of equality with men), 56(equality and non-discrimination), 62(right to access to information and 80 (right to women's protection from laws, customs, traditions, or customs that violate women's rights) of the Constitution and their significant importance on gender equality for elected and appointed leaders within the Government and its agencies;

SERIOUSLY CONCERNED about the recently gazetted exorbitant nomination fees and access to the voters' roll and electoral maps fees for prospective election candidates in Statutory Instruments 144 and 145 of 2022 respectively

DESIROUS of seeing the reversal of the recent proclamation which further perpetuates the systemic barriers to women's political participation and calls for the reform to the laws that ensure women's political representation in conformity with the Constitutional provisions, regional and international standards, norms, and principles:

NOW, THEREFORE the petitioners beseech the Parliament of Zimbabwe who is responsible to uphold the Supreme Law of the land by ensuring that Zimbabwe's legal framework is reviewed in compliance with the provisions of the Constitution as it relates to equal representation in elected and appointed positions since the fees hike will further exclude young women and women who are already struggling and excluded due to lack of campaign funds.

BACKGROUND

The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) recently gazetted Statutory Instrument 144 of 2022 which now stipulates the following payments for the respective political office aspirants:-

- ❖ In the office of the president, the aspiring candidate must pay US\$20 000.00 which is payable in cash or at the prevailing official rate equivalent,
- ❖ Constituency Members of Parliament must now pay US\$1 000.00,
- ❖ Proportional representation party lists for parliament and Provincial Councils must pay US\$100 and the same amount is required for election observation.

The charge for an electronic copy of a polling area, national and hard copy voters' roll must now pay:-

- ❖ US\$10 for each polling station,
- ❖ US\$15 for the ward level voters' roll,
- ❖ US\$50 for the constituency voters' roll,
- ❖ US\$150 for the provincial voters' roll,
- ❖ US\$200 for the national voters' roll,
- ❖ US\$1.00 per page for the physical copy.

Historically, the participation and representation of women in the political arena have been affected by patriarchal systems and structures that since time immemorial have hindered their participation and representation. Although several policies and laws were enacted to enhance the participation of women in elections and decision-making in Zimbabwe, the electoral playing field remains restrictive and oppressive to women and their participation remains low across all sectors of decision-making. These new exorbitant fees further marginalize the young women and women who cannot afford these astronomical fees, consequently closing the democratic space for women to participate.

As the IYWD, we are passionate about promoting and strengthening women's participation and representation in all spheres of governance. We contend that there must be gender parity supported by law in all decision-making positions and institutions and ZEC must be guided by the Constitutional provisions which protect and promote the participation of women in decision-making spaces. It is our considered view that these new gazetted fees are unconstitutional and unreasonably high, meant to

close the democratic space for the women political players, see Annexure 1 a Policy Commentary on Statutory Instruments 144 and 145 of 2022. It is, therefore, against this background that as the IYWD we respectfully differ with your position and the Petition and Pray as follows:

Petitioners' Plea and Prayer:

THUS, your petitioners ask that Parliament in light of its oversight and legislative role of protecting the provisions of the Constitution and National interests ensure that;

1. The Zimbabwe Electoral Commission (ZEC) and the responsible Minister of Legal and Parliamentary Affairs must, in consultation with citizens, and stakeholders, effect a downward revision of the gazetted nomination and access to the voters' roll and electoral maps fees and ensure that any set amounts are affordable, gender, youth, and disability sensitive.
2. That adequate funds are appropriated to the ZEC in a way that totally removes or ensures that prospective candidates pay a minimal affordable fee.
3. The State promptly and urgently align all electoral laws to the country's constitution to include the enactment of a Gender Equality Act which shall provide for equal representation in local government, parliament, and the presidium in line with Sections 17, 20, 56, and 80 of the constitution.
4. The State must further ensure strict adherence to the rights guaranteed in the Constitution by the State and its agents.


WHEREFORE your petitioners pray that your Honourable Office will be pleased to take their case into favorable consideration, and grant such relief as it may deem fit.

AND your petitioners, as in duty bound, will ever pray.

Dated at Harare, this 2nd day of September 2022

Signed by

IYWD Board Member


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Blessing Gorejena

IYWD Programmes Coordinator


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Sandra Zenda