

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NO. 5529

8 November 2024

MR GEORGE MICHALAKIS, MP

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL AND INVITATION FOR COMMENT, 2024

Mr George Michalakis, MP, acting in accordance with section 73(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (“the Constitution”), intends to introduce the Constitution Nineteenth Amendment Bill, 2024 (“the draft Bill”), in Parliament. An explanatory summary of the Bill is hereby published in accordance with section 74(5) of the Constitution, read with Rule 295(1) and (2) of the Rules of the National Assembly (9th Edition).

South Africa is currently in a transitional phase where no one party any longer holds majorities in a number of metros or councils across the country. With the 2026 local government elections around the corner, coalition governments will be the “new norm”. Parties and independent candidates will have to come together and form workable coalitions for the good of South Africa.

However, what we have witnessed at municipal level are continuous political attacks on coalition governments from opposition parties who politick smaller parties to cross the floor in exchange for valuable member of executive council positions should the incumbent government be successfully removed by way of a motion of no confidence. What we see in practice is motions of no confidence being used as a political tool, rather than for the mechanism it was originally intended, being a process to remove a speaker or mayor from office due to them not fulfilling their duties adequately. In fact, these motions are brought on spurious grounds only because the opposition coalition has 50% +1 of the votes to pass the motion. The result is that these motions make cities or municipalities ungovernable as a new executive is installed every other month, not allowing the incumbent government enough time to actually make a difference.

There can be no question that this practice will work its way up to both provincial and national governments when the time comes, which will have a disastrous impact on the stability of the country at-large. What needs to change is simple – there needs to be a limitation on the number of motions of no confidence that are allowed to be brought either at national or provincial spheres in a certain time frame. This will, at the very least, give the respective government an uninterrupted period in which to perform or steady the country.

The draft Bill therefore intends to limit the number of motions of no confidence to be brought against a president or premier to only one motion per every 12 month-period from the date of the last motion. However, as a safety mechanism, the draft Bill will propose that additional motions of no confidence may be brought in exceptional circumstances such as a violation of the Constitution or law, misconduct or the inability to perform the functions of office. The purpose of this provision is to safeguard against instances where a motion of no confidence is brought against the president or premier on frivolous political grounds but then shortly thereafter, there is a real and valid ground for their removal.

Interested parties and institutions are invited to submit written representations on the proposed content of the draft Bill to the Speaker of the National Assembly within 30 days of the publication of this notice. Representations can be delivered to the Speaker, New Assembly Building, Parliament Street, Cape Town; mailed to the Speaker, PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000; or emailed to speaker@parliament.gov.za and copied to legislation@da.org.za

Copies of the draft Bill, 2024, may, after introduction, be obtained from:

www.da.org.za

Democratic Alliance

PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000

Attention: Mr George Michalakis

Email: legislation@da.org.za