

A BILL

FOR

AN ACT TO ESTABLISH THE NIGERIAN POLITICAL DEBATE COMMISSION
WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONDUCT AND ORGANISATION OF PUBLIC
DEBATES FOR CANDIDATES OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA

Sponsored by Senator Abdulfatai Buhari

[] Commencement

BE IT ENACTED by the National Assembly of the Federal
Republic of Nigeria as follows:

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PART I

1.-(1) There is hereby established a body to be known as the
Nigerian Political Debate Commission (in this Bill referred to as 'the
Commission') which shall be charged with the responsibility of organizing
and conducting public debates for candidates of registered political parties
in Nigeria.

Establishment of
the Nigerian
Political Debate
Commission

PART II

2.-(1) There is established a Governing Council for the
Commission (in this Bill referred to as the Council) which shall conduct the
affairs of the Commission.

Composition

(2) The council shall consist of:

- (a) A part time Chairman who shall not be a member of any
Political Party;
- (b) One person from each of the registered Political Party;
- (c) One representative from the National Orientation Agency
(NOA);
- (d) One representative of the Broadcasting Organizations of
Nigerian (BON);
- (e) One representative of Nigerian Guild of Editors;
- (f) One representative of Nigerian Bar Association;

- 1 (g) One representative of Nigeria Labour Congress;
- 2 (h) Two representatives of Civil Society Groups:
- 3 (i) A representative each from;
- 4 (i) Federal Ministry of Education;
- 5 (ii) Federal Ministry of Justice;
- 6 (iii) Federal Ministry of Information;
- 7 (iv) Federal Ministry of Women Affairs;
- 8 (v) National Human Rights Commission; and
- 9 (vi) National Planning Commission.
- 10 (3) The Chairman of the Council shall be appointed by the President.
- 11 (4) The Chairman and other members of the Council shall be persons
- 12 of proven integrity, honour and ability with genuine concern and interest for the
- 13 political development of Nigeria.
- 14 3. Subject to Section 4 of this Bill, the Chairman and members of the
- 15 Council shall each hold office:
- 16 (a) For a term of 4 years and may be re-appointed for a further term of
- 17 4 years and no more; and
- 18 (b) On such terms and conditions as may be specified in his letter of
- 19 appointment.
- 20 4.-(1) A person may cease to hold office as a member of the Council
- 21 on the occurrences of any of the following:
- 22 (a) If he becomes bankrupt;
- 23 (b) He is convicted of a felony or any offence involving dishonesty or
- 24 fraud;
- 25 (c) He is disqualified of professional qualification;
- 26 (d) He is guilty of a serious misconduct in relation to his duties; or
- 27 (e) He resigns his appointment.
- 28 (2) Where a member of the Council cease to hold office for any reason
- 29 whatsoever before the expiration of the term for which he is appointed, another
- 30 person representing the same interest as that member shall be appointed to the

1 Council for the unexpired term.

2 (3) A member of the Council may be removed by the President on
3 the Recommendation of the Council if he is satisfied that it is not in the
4 interest of the Commission or the interest of the public that the member
5 continues in office.

6 5. Members of the Council shall be paid allowances and expenses
7 as the Government may direct from time to time.

8 PART III

9 6. The function of the Commission shall be to:

Functions and
Powers of the
Commission

10 (a) Conduct public debates for all candidates to the office of
11 Deputy Governor, Governor, Vice President and President;

12 (b) Help boost and strengthen the electoral process;

13 (c) Create awareness leading to the making of an informed choice
14 from the available pool of candidates;

15 (d) Create platform for candidates to articulate their policies before
16 the Election Day;

17 (e) Provide equal opportunity for the electorates to be better
18 informed about policy issues;

19 (f) Undertake or sponsor research where necessary for the
20 performance of its functions;

21 (g) Moderate the conduct of the electioneering debate;

22 (h) Recommend sanction(s) to the Independent National Electoral
23 Commission (INEC) for any candidate that obstruct the Commission from
24 carrying out its functions effectively.

25 7.-(1) the Commission has power to do any lawful thing which will
26 facilitate the carrying out of its functions and may:

27 (a) Sue and be sued in its corporate name;

28 (b) Acquire, hold and manage movable and immovable property;

29 (c) Purchase or acquire any assets, business or property considered
30 necessary for the proper conduct of its functions;

1 (d) Sell, let, lease or dispose of any of its property;

2 (e) Train managerial, technical or other category of staff for the
3 purpose of running the affairs of the Commission.

4 (2) The power conferred on the Commission may be exercised by it or
5 through any of its employees or agents authorized in that behalf by the
6 Commission.

7 (3) The Commission shall not be subjected to direction, control or
8 suspension by any other authority or person in the performance of its function
9 under this Bill other than the President.

10 (4) It shall be mandatory for all candidates aspiring to the offices
11 listed in Section 6 (a) of this Bill to participate in a public debate prior to the
12 elections.

13 (5) The Commission shall have power to recommend for
14 disqualification any candidate who refuses, fails or abstains from participating
15 in any debate organised pursuant to the provisions of this Bill.

16 **PART IV**

Appointment and
Duties of the
Executive Secretary
and other Staff

17 **8.-(1)** There shall be an Executive Secretary.

18 (2) The Executive Secretary shall:

19 (a) Have such qualification and experience as appropriate for a person
20 required to perform the functions of that office; and

21 (b) Be responsible to the Council for the execution of the policies and
22 the administration of the daily affairs of the Commission.

23 (2) The Executive Secretary may resign his office by writing under his
24 hand to the Chairman.

25 **9.-(1)** The Council shall appoint for the Commission such number of
26 employees as may in the opinion of the Council be expedient and necessary for
27 the proper and efficient performance of the function of the Commission.

28 (2) The staff of the Commission shall be entitled to their salaries and
29 wages as determined by the government.

1 PART V - INDEMNITY OF MEMBERS

2 10. No member shall be liable for an act done or omitted to be done
3 in the performance of his duties under or pursuant to this bill except acts
4 bordering on dishonesty, misconduct and other related matters.

5 PART VI - FINANCIAL PROVISION:

6 11.-(1) The Commission shall establish and maintain a fund into
7 which all moneys accruable to the Commission shall be paid and from which
8 all the projects and activities of the Commission shall be funded.

9 (2) The funds of the Commission shall be disbursed according to
10 the approved formula.

11 (3) The Council shall cause the account of the Commission to be
12 audited quarterly and shall be externally audited once every year.

13 12. The Commission may accept gift of land, money or other
14 property on such terms and conditions, if any, as may be specified by the
15 person or organization making the gift, provided such terms and conditions
16 are not inconsistent with any prevailing law and it is in consonance with the
17 objectives of the Commission.

18 13.-(1) The Commission shall submit to the Presidency through the
19 Secretary to the Government of the Federation not later than three months
20 from the end of each financial year the annual reports and it shall include the
21 copy of audited accounts of the Commission for that year and a copy of
22 Auditors report on it. Annual Report

23 14.-(1) The provisions of Public Protection Act shall apply in
24 relation to any suit instituted against any officer or employee of the
25 Commission. Limitation of suit
against the
Commission

26 (2) No suit shall commence against any of the activities of the
27 Commission before the written notice of intention to commence the suit and
28 shall be properly served upon the Commission by the intending plaintiff or
29 his agent(s);

30 (3) The notice referred to in sub-section (2) of this section shall

1 state the cause of action and the particulars of the action, the name and address
2 of the intending plaintiff and relief sought.

Regulations

3 **15.** Subject to the provisions of this section, the Commission may
4 make regulations generally for the purpose of this Bill and without prejudice to
5 the generality thereof, such regulations may contain provisions for specific
6 offences of types of misconduct that would disqualify any candidate from
7 participating in the debate organised or supervised by the Commission.

Interpretation

8 **16.** In this Bill unless the context otherwise requires:
9 'Commission' means the Political Debate Commission;
10 'Member' means a member of the Commission including the Chairman;
11 'Candidate' means a person that has been cleared by the Nigerian Electoral
12 Authority to contest election into the office of Deputy Governor, Governor,
13 Vice President and President;
14 'Political party' means political party registered by the Independent National
15 Electoral Commission (INEC);
16 'Function' includes duty;
17 'Governor' means Governor of a State;
18 'President' means President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of
19 the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Citation

20 **17.** This Bill may be cited as the Nigerian Political Debate
21 Commission (Est.) Bill, 2015.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

This Bill seeks to establish a Commission known as the Nigerian Political Debate Commission charged among other the responsibility of organising and conducting public debates among candidates of Political Parties contesting for the post of Deputy Governor, Governor, Vice-President and president in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.