

The cost of politics in Indonesia

Ella Syafputri Prihatini
Sri Budi Eko Wardani

November 2024

Disclaimer

The authors have exercised due care and expertise to ensure that the contents of this report are accurate at the time of publication and therefore accept no responsibility for any loss suffered by anyone as a result of using the content.

All rights in this book, including copyright, are owned by Westminster Foundation for Democracy Limited (WFD) and are protected by UK and international laws. No part of this book may be copied, distributed, translated, or adapted without the prior permission of WFD. All rights reserved.

The information and opinions presented are those of the authors' and do not necessarily represent the official views of WFD, its founders, or the UK Government. WFD or any person acting on its behalf cannot be held responsible for the consequences of the use of the information contained therein.

Authors

Ella Syafputri Prihatini is an assistant professor of political science at Universitas Muhammadiyah Jakarta and adjunct research fellow at the Centre for Muslim States and Societies of the University of Western Australia.

Sri Budi Eko Wardani is an associate professor of political science at Universitas Indonesia.

Acknowledgements

This study is supported by the WYDE Civic Engagement project, which is led by the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) and funded by the European Union (EU). The project is a component of the European Commission's Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative (WYDE) aimed at strengthening the involvement of young people in democratic processes at national, regional, and global levels.

Special thanks are due to **Ravio Patra**, WFD Country Director in Indonesia, who provided extensive technical and editorial support throughout the process.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Disclaimer | 2 |
| Authors | 2 |
| Table of contents | 3 |
| List of acronyms | 4 |
| Introduction | 5 |
| Methodology | 5 |
| Democratisation in context | 6 |
| Women and youth representation | 8 |
| Cost of politics in Indonesia’s 2024 legislative elections | 10 |
| Expenditure categories | 10 |
| <i>Nomination stage</i> | 11 |
| <i>Campaign stage</i> | 12 |
| <i>Election stage</i> | 13 |
| <i>Post-election stage</i> | 14 |
| Resource mobilisation | 14 |
| Drivers of high cost of politics | 16 |
| Implications for democracy | 18 |
| Exclusion of women and youth | 18 |
| Heightened corruption risk | 19 |
| Declining democracy..... | 19 |
| Recommendations | 20 |
| Safeguarding legal reforms | 20 |
| Strengthening accountability mechanisms | 21 |
| References | 23 |
| Annex 1 | 26 |
| Annex 2 | 27 |

List of acronyms

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Bawaslu | Election Oversight Agency |
| CSO | Civil Society Organisation |
| DKPP | Election Ethics Council |
| DPD RI | Regional Representatives Council of the Republic of Indonesia |
| DPR RI | House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia |
| DPRD | Subnational House of Representatives |
| FGD | Focus Group Discussion |
| Partai Gerindra | Great Indonesia Movement Party |
| Partai Golkar | Party of Functional Groups |
| ICW | Indonesia Corruption Watch |
| IDR | Indonesian Rupiah |
| KPK | Corruption Eradication Commission |
| KPU | General Election Commission |
| LADK | Campaign Fund Initial Report |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| MPR RI | People's Consultative Assembly of the Republic of Indonesia |
| Orba | New Order |
| PDI-P | Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle |
| Pemilu | General Elections |
| PPATK | Centre for Financial Transaction Analysis and Oversight |
| PPP | United Development Party |
| PSI | Indonesian Solidarity Party |
| RKDK | Campaign Fund Account |
| RSF | Reporters Without Borders |
| SKCK | Criminal Records Declaration |
| SOE | State-Owned Enterprise |

Introduction

Following the end of the military-based autocratic regime of President Suharto in 1998, Indonesia saw significant reforms to its political and judicial institutions and the decentralisation of power to over 500 municipalities. This period of democratisation, known as the *Reformasi* era, allowed for direct elections of the executive and legislative branches through a vibrant multi-party electoral system. The February 2024 vote marked the fifth direct election during the *Reformasi* era and, for the first time, national and subnational legislative elections were held simultaneously with the presidential vote. With nearly 205 million voters eligible to cast their ballots in more than 823,000 polling stations across 38 provinces and 128 representative countries, it is the world's largest single-day elections.¹

Focused on the 2024 legislative elections, this study aims to understand what it costs to seek and maintain elective office, the drivers of those costs, and the impacts they have on Indonesian democracy. A specific focus on marginalised groups such as women and youth is driven by existing research that suggests the rising cost of politics in Indonesia has not only entrenched and enhanced this status quo, but also effectively lowered the chance of less affluent or connected candidates to win parliamentary seats.² With women continuing to be underrepresented in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), this research contributes not only to literature on women and youth's political participation but on the impacts and implications of the cost of politics on Indonesian democracy.

Experts argue that DPR RI has played an active role in democratic backsliding and autocratic legalism.³ Instead of applying extensive scrutiny of draft legislation, optimising deliberation, and allowing public consultation, it has increasingly catered to elite interests. One explanation for this trend is the growth of electoral clientelism, which has seen the increased presence of businesspersons with vested economic interests in legislative bodies.⁴ This situation is exacerbated by electoral regulations which increase competition among parties and worsen existing problems with party institutionalisation. This has made election campaigning more individualistic and expensive⁵ while parties more inclined to nominate candidates based on sheer electability—those with strong financial capital and established social and political networks—as opposed to building organic capabilities.

Methodology

This research collected comprehensive information about the various expenses that legislative candidates for DPR RI incur across the nomination, campaign, election, and post-election stages in line with the cost of politics approach of the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). For incumbent candidates, the cost includes all expenditures incurred during their parliamentary term in recognition of the cyclical nature of politics and political campaigning. In addition to gathering this largely indicative data, the study also sought to understand the factors shaping the cost of politics

while also identifying the key drivers that continue to increase these expenses, which could jeopardise efforts to achieve better representative democracy in Indonesia.

Table 1: *Distribution of interviewees by gender, party affiliation, and incumbency*

| Code | Gender | Age | Candidate Status | Party Status in 2019–2024 Term | Result |
|------|--------|-----|------------------|--------------------------------|-------------|
| R1 | Female | 55 | Incumbent | In Parliament | Elected |
| R2 | Female | 59 | Incumbent | In Parliament | Elected |
| R3 | Female | 30 | Challenger | In Parliament | Elected |
| R4 | Female | 46 | Incumbent | In Parliament | Not Elected |
| R5 | Female | 52 | Incumbent | In Parliament | Not Elected |
| R6 | Female | 46 | Challenger | Non-Parliament | Not Elected |
| R7 | Female | 46 | Challenger | Non-Parliament | Not Elected |
| R8 | Male | 46 | Incumbent | In Parliament | Elected |
| R9 | Male | 47 | Incumbent | In-Parliament | Not Elected |

Qualitative methods combining desk-based research of relevant literature and news reports with in-depth interviews and a focus group discussion (FGD) were used to gather this data. Interviews were conducted between May and July 2024 with nine legislative candidates representing seven of the 18 political parties that competed in the 2024 legislative elections. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The identity of respondents was coded to ensure anonymity (see **Table 1**). In addition, a FGD was held with five representatives from academia and civil society whose works focus on elections and democracy.

Our research approach gave specific weight to the experience of women candidates. Seven of the nine interviews were conducted with women—with just one in the youth bracket—in recognition that prohibitively expensive elections hurt women more than men given that women tend to have less access to the capital necessary to obtain winnable party list positions and finance their campaigns.⁶ To date, legislated gender quotas in Indonesia are not accompanied by financial support from either the party or the state. Thus, affirmative policies tend to be enjoyed by a group of women who have substantial monetary resources and strong kinship networks to begin with.⁷

Democratisation in context

The democratisation process in Indonesia gained significant momentum on 21 May 1998, when President Suharto announced his resignation. This brought his 32-year rule as the country’s

second president to an end amidst a major economic crisis exacerbated by widespread corruption and cronyism. Until that point, Suharto's authoritarian practices had largely stifled electoral representation by undermining two core elements of democracy: political participation and representation.

Under his 'New Order' (*Orba*) regime, citizens were prohibited from establishing new political parties beyond those already formed and recognised by the government.⁸ Suharto's administration also exercised control over decision-making in what should have been people's representative bodies by filling legislative seats in the People's Consultative Assembly (MPR RI), DPR RI, and subnational parliaments (DPRD) through manipulated elections and extensive presidential appointment processes. This was further worsened by the presence of legal frameworks that placed severe restrictions on civil liberties, press freedom, civil society organisations (CSOs), and freedom of expression.

The ensuing political reforms after Suharto's departure paved the way for a restructuring of Indonesia's political system. Legal impediments to political participation and civil liberties were removed and revised as part of a constitutional overhaul that saw the 1945 constitution amended four times between 1999 and 2002 (see **Figure 1**). These amendments fundamentally altered the structure of Indonesia's political system by introducing general elections for members of DPR RI, the Senate (DPD RI), as well as the president and vice president. New political parties began forming and participating in elections, whilst direct elections for the president and vice president effectively dissolved the authority of MPR RI to elect and dismiss the posts, as was the case in the New Order regime.

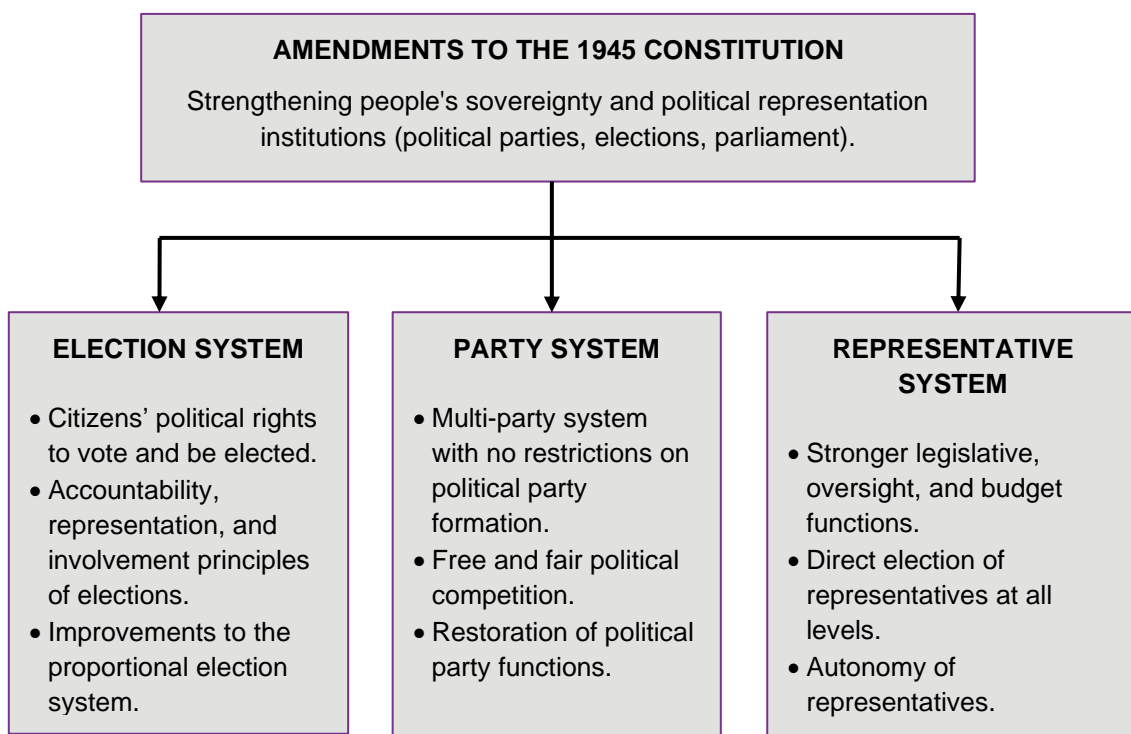


Figure 1: Impact of constitutional amendments on election, party, and representative systems

Variations of the proportional representation system had been in place since Indonesia's first elections in 1955. It evolved from a closed list proportional system, where the number of seats in an electoral district were allocated proportionally based on its population,⁹ to a semi-open list proportional system in 2004, where voters were allowed to pick a party only or both a party and a candidate, but not a candidate only. Under this semi-open list system, election results are determined based on the highest number of votes received within a specified threshold. If votes fall below such threshold, then the winning candidates are decided based on their position on the party list. In other words, winning the most votes did not automatically guarantee a seat in parliament.

This evolved further in 2009, when Indonesia adopted an open-list proportional system, which has brought fundamental changes to political representation dynamics in Indonesia by allowing voters to directly choose a preferred candidate. However, this has also meant that familiarity and connection with individual candidates became equally as (or even more) important than the political party itself. This has led to an intensified competition among legislative candidates as they work to secure the highest number of votes even within the same political parties.

Women and youth representation

Improving women's political representation has been one of *Reformasi's* key focus areas. In the early 2000s, CSOs and pro-democracy activists advocated for the creation of affirmative action policies for women legislative candidates with some success. Article 65 of Law No. 12/2003 on Elections mandated parties running in the 2004 legislative elections to "consider" the representation of at least 30% women candidates. However, parties frequently disregarded the instruction as it was an appeal with no consequence. Only 14 of the 24 political parties that participated in the 2004 election nominated at least 30% of women on their candidate lists—even major parties such as the Party of Functional Groups (Golkar) and the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) fell short of meeting this requirement.

Commitments to gender quotas have been strengthened subsequently through amended Election Laws issued in 2008, 2012, and 2017, to the point that parties are now legally required to nominate a minimum of 30% female candidates across district, provincial, and national legislative elections with a one-in-three zipper system. Ahead of the 2019 legislative elections, the General Election Commission (KPU) issued Regulation No. 20/2018 which outlined strong penalties for parties to be disqualified in districts where their nomination list failed to satisfy the 30% minimum quota. As a result, there was full compliance. In fact, five of the 15 parties that participated in that year's elections recorded 40% of women representation on their candidate lists. However, the overall percentage of women elected to DPR RI was only at 20.5%.¹⁰ In the 2024 elections, while only one of the 18 parties nominated at least 30% women as candidates, KPU did not enforce any penalties.

Statistically, the 2024 elections resulted in the highest number of women representation (127) in DPR RI since 1999 (see **Figure 2**).¹¹ Notably, there is an unequal geographic distribution with eight of the 38 provinces (Aceh, Jambi, Gorontalo, Riau Islands, and four Papua provinces) not electing any women candidates. Such underrepresentation can be attributed to four key factors:

- Recruitment mechanisms within party structures are not transparent and often controlled by internal elites.
- Most parties limit women’s involvement to women-specific divisions and issues, resulting in limited inclusive opportunities and strategies.
- Political patriarchy prevails and continues to impede women's ability to win elections.¹²
- Exorbitant cost of politics discourages women from running for public office as they lack access to the capital and networks required to win elections.

Moreover, with over 59% of incumbent women lawmakers are affiliated with political dynasties,¹³ there are concerns that affirmative action policies have been co-opted by political oligarchs and in turn restrict the space for new women candidates to emerge.

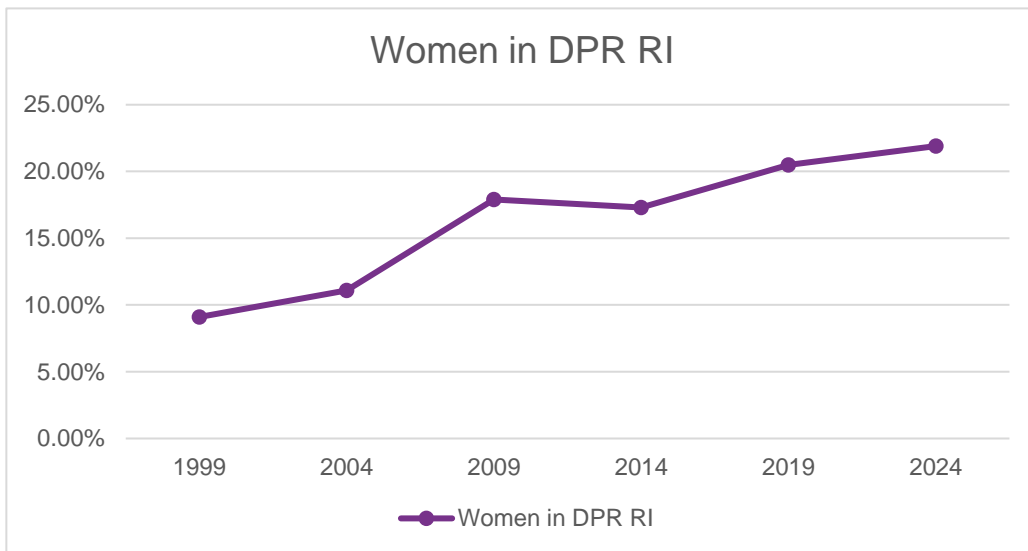


Figure 2: Share of seats held by women in DPR RI from 1999 to 2024¹⁴

Dynastic politics is a phenomenon that limits aspiring politicians coming from less affluent backgrounds. Belonging to a political family poses key advantages to entering politics globally for both democracies and non-democracies.¹⁵ These electoral advantages include uncompetitive political socialisation and apprenticeship in political strategy. Individuals can also capitalise on name brand recognition, trust from voters, greater attention, and coverage from the media, as well as pre-existing networks and organisations to get out or even buy votes.¹⁶ At least 220 members of DPR RI (37.8%) have kinship ties with public officials or influential political figures.¹⁷

The prevalence is also significantly higher among younger cohorts, with 85 out of the 137 members of DPR RI and DPD RI (62%) aged 40 or younger associated with political dynasties—a figure that worsens among those aged 30 or younger: 33 of 43 members (76.7%) have political kinship ties. On average, elected members of DPR RI with political dynasty association won 240,675 (30%) more votes compared to other young MPs without any political kinship in the 2024 elections.¹⁸ Overall, the fact that very few non-incumbent candidates and members of political families won the

2024 elections¹⁹ demonstrates a significantly shrinking space for candidates without existing political leverage to compete for public offices.

Cost of politics in Indonesia’s 2024 legislative elections

A total of 9,917 candidates (37% women and 14% aged 21–30)²⁰ competed for the 580 DPR RI seats in 2024.²¹ Despite a much shorter campaign period of just 75 days (compared to more than 200 days in the previous three elections), there was no shortage of expenditure.²²

A 2014 study by the Institute for Economic and Social Research estimated that DPR RI candidates spent between IDR 1.18–4.6 billion on average to get elected.²³ This was a four-fold increase from the 2009 election estimate of IDR 250 million. A member of parliament (MP) representing the Great Indonesian Movement Party (Partai Gerindra) acknowledged the validity of these estimates when reflecting on their IDR 2 billion outlay in the 2019 election.²⁴ They claimed to be aware of candidates who spent as much as IDR 20–25 billion to boost their popularity and electability.

In the 2024 elections, candidates for DPR RI engaged in this research spent as little as IDR 200 million and as much as IDR 160 billion. However, these figures are likely outliers rather than the norm. The average figure, given by the remaining seven predominantly female respondents engaged for this study, suggest a more realistic average at IDR 5 billion (approximately USD 315,000). Despite the small sample population, such wide range highlights the sizable disparity among candidates in terms of campaign expenses that can be attributed to political status, financial capacity, and socio-political background.

For the most parts, expenditures are a burden borne by individual candidates, often without any support from their political party. Especially for women and young candidates, the required funds present a huge challenge as men remain the traditional head of most households and male breadwinning norms dominate power relations and family decision-making dynamics. In Indonesia, these are further exacerbated by the widespread belief of kodrat—the belief that men and women have naturally distinguishable roles based on certain biological characteristics—which leave women with the restrictive expectation of serving as dutiful wives, mothers, and homemakers.²⁵

Expenditure categories

In this section, we discuss the categories of expenditures borne by candidates across four election stages: nomination, campaign, election, and post-election.

Table 2: Cost of politics across the four stages of elections

| Stage | Tangible | Intangible |
|-------------------|--|---|
| Nomination | Dowry money to political party, electability survey, registration fees, and campaign team preparation. | Nurturing social capital, lobbying political party elites, and gathering local support. |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|---|
| Campaign | Campaign properties, community meetings, political consultants, campaign team salaries, and office space. | Directly engaging voters, building and maintaining relationships with key local stakeholders, and being absent to family members. |
| Election | Paying for polling station witnesses, cash and goods gifts, campaign team salaries, office space, and legal costs (if applicable). | Time and effort of securing votes, monitoring vote counting process, and maintaining close contact with election officials. |
| Post-election | Maintaining campaign properties in the electoral district, regular constituency visits, securing assistance programmes and budget allocation for projects in constituencies, and party contributions. | Time and effort to engage constituents regularly, promoting and supporting party agendas in parliament, and supporting political party promotion and development in the electoral district. |

Nomination stage

Aspiring candidates not only need to secure party nomination but also to be listed in winnable list positions. The latter is crucial given that more than 80% of those elected in 2024 occupied the first or second spots on the ballot sheets.²⁶ Previous studies suggest that voters consider the candidates list as a cue for the best cadre nominated and vote accordingly. This means that parties increasingly treat their tickets as a commodity, a reality that has seen a growing prominence of high “dowry money” payments made in exchange for the top spot.²⁷

Another component, and expense, of the nomination process mentioned by respondents is an electability survey, with these often conducted multiple times per election with the same or different pollsters. Fees vary according to the number of respondents and the size of the electorate. For example, the cost of surveying 400 respondents in Java and Sumatera ranges between IDR 135–150 million. Meanwhile, the cost is much higher at IDR 180–350 million in Maluku and Papua due to transportation and logistics costs. The surveys help candidates in mapping sections in the community where they will be most accepted, where they should focus campaigning and how much they should spend.

“In 2019, the party hired a survey consultant to measure my electability, and the total costs required to win. The consultant proposed I spend IDR 14 billion to win a seat. This included surveys and fees for the consultant team to make me win the election. The party covered most of it, and I paid only IDR 1.8 billion. This cost was far less compared to other elected candidates in my electorate.”²⁸

One respondent claimed she relies on her internal team to conduct surveys to map out potential voters and to prepare strategies to win their support. But despite having a track record of maintaining her seat, the party still required external consultants to help her with the electability survey. As a newcomer, one respondent needed to win her party’s nomination, and an electability survey helped her to negotiate with them. “I asked for an electorate where my father has a strong influence, and the party never won a single seat,” she explained.²⁹ With a promising survey result, she received the party’s nomination and was listed atop the ballot sheets.

During the nomination stage, candidates must also bear the costs of registration and associated bills, such as medical check-ups and criminal records declaration (SKCK).³⁰ Most respondents claimed that they paid their own bills, however, some parties do provide reimbursement for these fees as one aspirant explained.

“Most parties may not cover registration fees, but my party does. Basically, in our party, candidates are not allowed to spend their own money. Hence, we can reimburse all expenses regarding registration costs. But surely, we need more money to pay for campaign expenditures. I had to fork out about IDR 100 million out of my own pocket.”³¹

Campaign stage

KPU regulates campaign expenditure, which is defined as activities of election participants or other parties to convince voters by offering a vision, mission, programme and self-image.³² In 2024, these regulations included setting the price of campaign materials at a maximum of IDR 100 thousand and restricting the size and dimension of props as well as the locations for installation. Yet, candidates regularly violated these rules without consequence, spending significant amounts of money to pay for election props such as banners, billboards, and advertisements on digital media platforms. One respondent claimed that the printing and shipping of goods and materials to engage her electorate took as much as 45% of her total campaign budget. Printing and shipping costs were often cited as a major campaign expense especially when the electoral district is in outer Java. Another prominent campaign outlay for candidates was on billboards, this includes not only the lease of the spot but paying people to ensure the materials are not destroyed or removed.

Holding community meetings also requires candidates to spend significant sums. They are expected to pay for refreshments, souvenirs, and offer transport refunds as compensation for attendees taking time out of work to attend which can range from IDR 50–100 thousand per person for each event. There is a consensus that potential voters would see no benefit in coming to campaign gatherings if candidates do not give away anything. This “gifting” practice is driven by the voters’ expectations as much as by candidates.

But candidates cannot do all this on their own. To support the organisation of community meetings, candidates use networks of field coordinators and campaign supporters. Their numbers vary depending on the size of the electoral district and the resources at the disposal of the aspirant. Respondents claimed to have between 2,400 and 12,000 campaign supporters helping them persuade potential voters in villages and neighbourhood associations across their electoral district.

These field coordinators and campaign teams receive regular incentives to support them with local transport and other related expenses. Whilst some respondents claimed they paid team members IDR 200 thousand per person per month, others said only field coordinators received regular payment with the remaining, and less senior, team members invited to attend free dinner or lunch events paid for by the aspirant. To further ease coordination and maximise the implementation of campaign strategies during the official campaign period and even before, some candidates decided

to live in their electoral district, but this can increase costs further due to their proximity to prospective voters.

Candidates rely on their campaign teams to secure votes on election day and calculate that, at the bare minimum, each team member will get their family members to vote for the candidate they are working for. In theory, campaign costs should be much cheaper if a candidate is well-known either because of being an incumbent or a public figure. However, one respondent argued that “if you are an incumbent, people will have higher expectations towards you. They expect you to bring more money and other benefits.”³³ To meet expectations, connections to local powerbrokers are critical and can reduce the costs that an individual has to outlay. These can be accessed through existing familial ties in some instances, whilst other candidates must build and sustain these networks through patron-client relationships. For example, when a governor’s daughter or wife is running for DPR RI, the endorsement from the governor will give them strategic leverage by increasing the delivery of programmes and social assistance resources. Respondents underscored that when parties look for women candidates, they tend to seek out those affiliated with local rulers as it gives them the best chance of success. A practice that further hurts marginalised unconnected candidates, especially women and youth, who already struggle to compete financially.

Election stage

On election day, as well as the immediate post-election period, candidates are still expected to allocate substantial funds to secure victory. The sheer amount of money that candidates disperse at this point is often likened to a tsunami that may wipe out all their remaining resources. Here, more than anywhere else, access to resources is key according to an econometric estimation which suggested that for each additional IDR 100 million spent, the chances of winning increased by five percentage points, for both incumbents and challengers.³⁴

Some respondents openly admitted to distributing money in envelopes to buy votes through their campaign teams while others claimed that only their political opponents did so, with the figures ranging from IDR 100–500 thousand. Although this is in contravention of the electoral law, it remains common practice. The average voter’s limited education and economic predicament are viewed as being key factors contributing to the normalisation of vote buying.³⁵

Given persistent issues with electoral integrity, hiring witnesses to observe polling stations and counting centres to ensure that ballots cast are counted correctly has also become a critical need during the voting period.³⁶ The Election Oversight Agency (Bawaslu) provides one official witness per station, but this is deemed insufficient as they can often be paid to look away as the counting process is manipulated and rigged. To minimise electoral fraud, political parties prepare their own witnesses to protect their votes. A calculation by the PDI-P, winner of the last three legislative elections, suggests that a witness, on average, receives IDR 100,000 to carry out their duty. With more than 823 thousand stations across the country and up to two people assigned to each post, the minimum budget required could be as high as IDR 165 billion. However, this cost is not borne by the party but rather by incumbent candidates who pay in instalments to their respective parties. “The amount varies, but I pay about IDR 15 million per month to my party as a sitting parliamentarian,” explained one respondent.³⁷

Post-election stage

The significant effort invested in the electoral district does not end once a candidate is elected and begins their work as an MP. Addressing constituents' aspirations and advocating for their interests must be managed continuously by representatives. Lawmakers continuously receive requests from their constituents asking for money, goods, and the allocation of government scholarships, programmes or grants to their districts. The responsiveness of elected representatives to their constituents' requests is driven, in part, by the fact that sitting parliamentarians must maintain steady political support from voters to ensure their re-election.

While the election law rules that the campaign period occurs only during the 75 days before the voting day, legislative candidates incur campaign costs for as much as two years before the election cycle formally begins. One respondent who was previously an MP for three consecutive terms explained that when it came to the formal campaign period, the costs would not be as big because they “had met with the constituents for five years” while in office.³⁸ Whilst another claimed she frequently visits her electoral district and offers various government programmes as part of a long-term re-election strategy.

“The proportion of funds to be distributed via MPs varies depending on the agreement between the ministries/state agencies and the committees in DPR RI. In general, around 20% of programme budgets are distributed by MPs to their respective districts. And as different committees have different partners in the executive branch, some committees are very “dry” while others are “wet”.”³⁹

To compensate for the disparity across committees, lawmakers in “wet” committees tend to share these resources by reallocating the goods and services from government programmes to those who sit in the “dry” committees from the same party.⁴⁰ One respondent, who currently sits in Committee 3 which oversees law, human rights, and state security explained that “I once distributed tractor machines to my electoral district as a result of a transfer from my colleague in Committee 4 [whose portfolio covers agriculture, forestry, maritime, and fisheries].”⁴¹

The advantages of incumbency not only help reduce the costs of election bids they increase the chances of electoral success. From 25.2% in 2009, the percentage of incumbent candidates who have successfully sought re-election has steadily increased reaching 56% in 2024.⁴²

Resource mobilisation

For political aspirants, funding for nominations and campaigns tends to come from three main sources: (a) personal wealth, (b) donations from immediate or extended family members, peer groups and community networks, as well (c) party assistance.

Party support tends to be very limited. It is mainly confined to a limited supply of campaign props such as banners and clothing items, with any funds awarded at the discretion of the national party chairperson. One male respondent claimed that when he initially ran as a legislative candidate in

the 2019 election, he was one of just a few hopefuls to receive cash support from the party. “At that time, the party was new and really eager to win seats in DPR RI,”⁴³ and decided to run a survey to identify legislative candidates with promising electability and provided financial support under an unofficial “scholarship” scheme. In contrast, a female respondent representing Partai Golkar asserted that she had never received any financial support from the party since her first nomination in 2009. She contended that as an incumbent, she is regarded as an established politician who does not require such assistance and should instead contribute financially to the party.

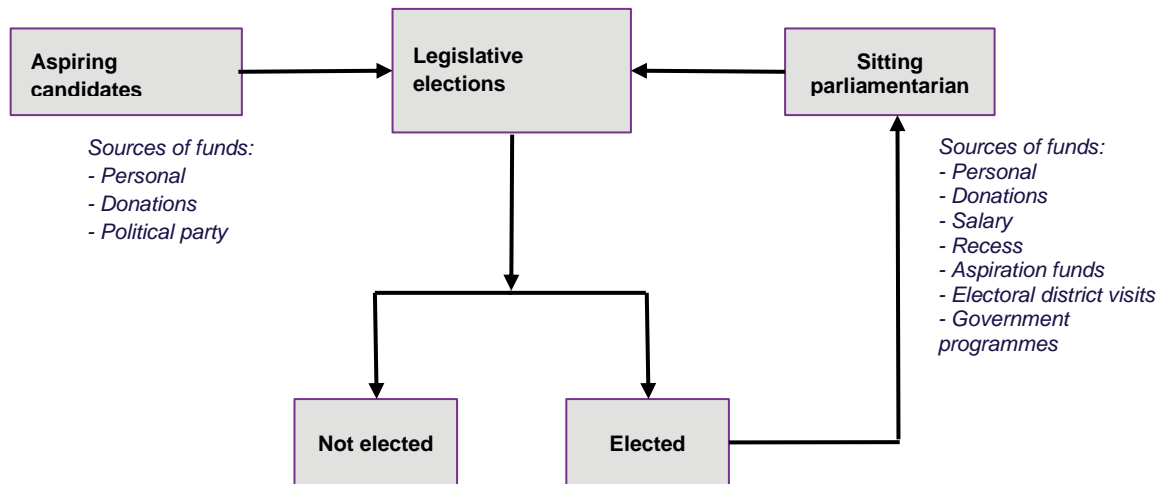


Figure 3: Election cycle and sources of campaign funds

In addition to their monthly salary and legislated sources of funds (see **Annex 2**), sitting parliamentarians benefit from distributing government programmes in the form of goods and services. They routinely channel aspiration funds and conduct constituency visits in their capacity as sitting MPs, which provides substantial opportunities to gain exposure and popularity. Because of this access to resources, parties tend to prioritise incumbents by nominating them first or second on the ballot during elections, as they have already used incumbency resources to lay the groundwork for a successful campaign.

“Every MP receives aspiration funds of IDR 450 million for each of the five recess periods observed in a single year, or IDR 2.25 billion annually. In addition, we have a budget allocation of IDR 150 million for a total of 8 constituency visits every year, or IDR 1.2 billion annually. If we only disburse these funds as financial and administrative facilities, I believe I have spent at least IDR 3.45 billion per year or IDR 17.25 billion during a full-term in parliament.”⁴⁴

Non-incumbent aspirants are disadvantaged as a result, particularly if they are women. Reflecting on her first attempt running in 2004, one female respondent explained: “I did not receive any donations, only support from the party and personal savings with approval from my husband.”⁴⁵ Similarly, another female aspirant explained that in the 2019 elections, she used personal savings from working on various government projects to avoid having to ask for her husband’s

permission.⁴⁶ In Indonesia, women often need to obtain spousal approval and support, which does not apply to men.⁴⁷

The experience of female candidates interviewed suggested that personal and family money frequently overlap. One informant revealed that her parents and extended family provided the most financial assistance for her candidacy.⁴⁸ Another asserted that in 2019 she was running for a local parliament seat where her father owns a very successful business. In 2024, she changed her political affiliation to represent a party whose chairman is a good acquaintance of her parents. This combination of strong connections with the political elite and strong financial resources was key to getting her nominated by the party, even though she was not a member. She claimed that her campaign was fully supported by her father and that she “distributed gifts to potential voters and narrated it as part of my father’s company’s corporate social responsibility effort.”⁴⁹ An example that illustrates why parties are more inclined to nominate wealthy candidates.

Official expenditure

Legislative candidates in 2024 were permitted to receive contributions in the forms of money, goods, and services up to a maximum of IDR 2.5 billion from individual donors and IDR 25 billion from corporate donors. All candidates are obliged to report their campaign income and expenditure to their respective parties for further documentation and calculation. This is in accordance with the Election Law requirement for parties to report campaign resources through a campaign fund report as well as to open a special campaign fund account. However, compliance remains low as there is no specific mechanism in place to verify the accuracy of these reports to ensure accountability and transparency.

A report by the Centre for Financial Transaction Analysis and Oversight (PPATK) assessed that political parties’ special campaign fund accounts generally do not reflect the actual campaign activities undertaken, estimating a total of IDR 51 trillion suspicious transactions based on a review of 100 legislative candidates. Yet, KPU’s stance of not imposing sanctions on political parties with inconsistent campaign finance reporting has heightened scrutiny on the need for a greater commitment to electoral transparency and accountability.

Drivers of high cost of politics

Four key factors drive the high, and increasing, cost of politics in Indonesia.

First, the open-list proportional representation system makes competition between candidates more pronounced and, in doing so, drives up the cost. While this system was intended to widen the opportunities for more diverse candidature, in practice it has led to elections effectively becoming a popularity contest where familiarity and a candidates ability to (re)distribute resources has more influence on voters than ideology or policy agendas.

“Political representation based on ideology does not exist in our society. For example, there is no such thing as women choosing women, workers choosing workers, farmers choosing farmers, activists choosing activists. I am a labour activist, but there is no advocacy for workers to choose me even though I go down to the labour base area.”⁵⁰

With the threshold parties must acquire to be included in the calculation of distributing DPR RI seats set at 4% of the national vote, they prioritise candidates with strong economic, social, and political resources who can win the most votes even if that creates competition between their candidates in an electoral district. For instance, political parties nominate incumbent candidates with their established voter base alongside new candidates with strong resources or political kinship or dynastic ties in the same electoral district. In other words, political parties deliberately set up competitions between incumbent and well-resourced new candidates to increase their chances of securing seats in any given electoral district. However, because they lose their seats to candidates within the same party, the party suffers no losses at the end of the day and can sometimes even gain seats, as one respondent explained.

“In the previous election, I was number one on the ballot. For this election, I was demoted to number two, which required me to come up with a new strategy. The candidate that got number one on the ballot was chair of the party at the provincial level and is also a relative of the mayor. I was able to get re-elected by expanding and remapping my voter base. I had foresight of the situation and knew how many voters would change their minds in exchange for money and how much percentage my vote would drop.”⁵¹

Second, the government’s decision to hold presidential as well as legislative elections—at both national and subnational levels—simultaneously in 2024 increased costs. For legislative candidates, the simultaneous schedule meant that they were expected to not only campaign for their candidacies but also for the presidential nominees endorsed by their political parties.

“With the two elections held on the same day, I do not think voters were really focused on legislative candidates. It was especially harder if our party is not part of the ruling coalition. They have more resources to bring to the electorate, and, with largely pragmatic voters, our hard work was fruitless.”⁵²

Third, weak and inconsistent enforcement of regulations by the electoral authorities. KPU and Bawaslu have consistently failed to display a serious commitment to investigate disparities between submitted financial reports and actual expenditures. Respondents also singled out Bawaslu for allegedly cherry-picking which reports of campaign rule violation they choose to investigate.

“Money politics has gotten even wilder because Bawaslu turned a blind eye to it, same goes with the police. They all consider money politics as normal. The level of omission displayed by electoral authorities makes people commit money politics in plain sight now—no longer hiding or disguising it.”⁵³

Finally, the preponderance and accepted culture of vote buying drives heightened political costs. Purchasing votes has become normalised in Indonesian politics. Campaigning is primarily about distributing gifts and monetary incentives in exchange for votes; a reality that both politicians and a majority of citizens appear to have accepted.

“I have helped labour unions access social security programmes and advocated for their rights. But neither gave me any leverage during the elections because they voted for candidates that handed them cash. The higher the amount, the more likely their support will go there.”⁵⁴

Implications for democracy

The high cost of politics in Indonesia has increasingly excluded women and youth from participating fully, heightened the risk of entrenched corruption and contributed to a decline in the quality of democratic debate.

Exclusion of women and youth

As seeking political office in Indonesia gets more expensive, financial capacity is becoming an indispensable element of a candidate's profile. Each contestant has to build up campaign networks, hire pollsters to help with electability surveys, pay witnesses to observe the voting and counting processes, compensate political parties for their nomination, hand out gifts and money to voters, and run advertisements in offline and online media platforms. The 2024 election outcomes point to a strong connection between wealth, political connections, and electability among successful youth candidates.⁵⁵ A respondent described political parties “giving out tickets to run for governors to mayors’ daughters or wives” as their electability will be very high.⁵⁶ Women and youth with successful business backgrounds are also viewed favourably by parties who see these figures are being able to financial compete.

But opportunities for ordinary citizens to be nominated in elections, particularly women and youth, are increasingly narrow as a result. Our estimate of average spending in the 2024 election—IDR 5 billion—towers over the national median income of IDR 36 million.⁵⁷ In other words, the average person in Indonesia would need to work for 140 years without spending any of their income to be able to fund a political campaign. With the gender pay gap a persistent leaving women earning 23% less than men on average for the same job,⁵⁸ such high cost of politics clearly imposes a disproportionately greater impact on female candidates. Nearly all the women respondents

interviewed for this study admitted that they were unlikely to contest again if something is not done to address the unfair playing field, with the high costs a particular barrier to entry.

Heightened corruption risk

The high costs involved with seeking elective office increase the risk that legislative candidates seek funding from illegitimate sources, both during the campaigns and when in office. Data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) show that hundreds of state administrators across all administrative levels have been arrested on suspicion of corruption, some of which cannot be separated from the political process.⁵⁹ Former chairperson of the United Development Party (PPP) Muhammad Romahurmuziy, who was convicted of bribery in 2019, has publicly spoken out about politicians committing corruption out of political necessity.⁶⁰

While candidates spend billions of rupiahs for a seat in DPR RI, the official salary and benefits they receive if successful though significant fall short of the average expenditure detailed by respondents to this study (see **Annex 2**). This means that to repay the capital spent during the campaign, MPs often need to find ways to obtain extra income, increasing their susceptibility to bribes and corruption. KPK reported that 344 MPs across DPR RI and DPRD, 24 governors, and 159 mayors/regents were investigated for corruption between 2004 and 2023.⁶¹

Indonesia Corruption Watch noted that 354 out of 580 elected MPs (61.5%) are businesspersons, both directly involved as owners and those not officially listed as owners⁶². The share of businesspeople entering DPR RI has almost doubled from 1999 when it stood at 33.6%. Increasingly a parliamentary seat is perceived as a tool to gain power, influence, and financial benefits in return for investment during the campaign period. This trend is worrying because lawmakers act as referees, players, and coaches in trading lucrative governmental positions such as a director or commissioner in state-owned enterprise.

Declining democracy

The high cost of running for public office is reflected in institutional and structural shortcomings to ensure fair, equal, and democratic competition. Parties' procedural approach, driven by their goal to secure power in the parliament, restrains political mobility for potential contenders without significant capital and connections. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the share of incumbents and politicians from political families has increased significantly since 1999.

With elections becoming more of a popularity contest rather than processes centred around ideological debates or policy commitments, and MPs focused more on a development agenda that advances their re-election chances than the necessary decisions needed to enhance development more broadly, the quality of democratic debate, at all levels, is in decline.

Recommendations

The need to tackle the increasing and high cost of politics and the implications this is having on undermining inclusive, transparent, and participatory democratic processes is clear. This section provides recommendations that address legal deficiencies, propose greater civic engagement, and highlight the need for stronger accountability mechanisms.

Safeguarding legal reforms

Ahead of the next elections, the government and parliament must prioritise **revising Law No. 2/2011 on Political Party** with considerations to:

- **Increase financial assistance for political parties**, which could help political parties be less dependent on political donations and improve the share of female and youth cadres through dedicated training. A bigger share of public funding could justify demanding greater accountability from political parties on how they manage their finances.
- **Improve the transparency of party cadre recruitment**. For example, by setting a minimum term, one must serve as a party member before receiving a party nomination in elections.
- **Decentralise decision-making within internal political party mechanisms** by listening to the aspirations of all members, including those at subnational branches.
- **Strengthen affirmative action policy** aimed at increasing the representation of marginalised groups such as women and youth.
- **Mandate the provision of proportional financial support for women and youth candidates** through a public, open, and transparent mechanism where all potential candidates have equal access to financial support from political parties.
- **Introduce affirmative action policy in political party management structure** at all levels to go in tandem with the party quota requirement as a prerequisite for competing in elections.
- **Equip Bawaslu with greater and clearer authority to monitor compliance and enforce sanctions** towards violation of electoral integrity measures across all election stages.
- **Create public participation avenues in monitoring political parties' compliance**, for example, through a dedicated complaint channel and/or redress mechanism.

The participation of civil society and academia will be key to promoting these reform areas during the legislative amendment process, especially through contributing evidence and studies to support the reform. In addition, the government and parliament also need to **revise Law No. 7/2017 on Election** ahead of the next elections with the focus to:

- **Lower the parliamentary threshold**, as mandated by the Constitutional Court decision in February 2024,⁶³ which would reduce the number of votes that are not converted into legislative seats and reduce competition among candidates of the same party.
- **Evaluate the efficiency of the open-list proportional representation system** in the nomination process of elections. Key stakeholders must be open to exploring alternative options, including a combination of open-list and closed-list proportional representation systems.

- **Strengthen the implementation of affirmative action policy** for women candidates, for example, by enforcing a **pure zipper system** between men and women in the ballot paper or even mandating the placement of women candidates on **30% of the first spots**. A collective push from women units within political party management structure would be key to realising this reform.
- **Evaluate the simultaneous scheduling of presidential and legislative elections** across all levels, which proved to be challenging in 2024.⁶⁴
- **Implement stricter measures on polling station witness** to increase its efficiency and minimise the risk of jeopardising electoral integrity and increasing the cost of politics.
- **Expand the scope of campaign finance reporting** to create accountability requirements for individual candidates beyond political parties and presidential nominees.
- **Intensify the scrutiny of campaign finance reporting** by mandating an independent audit and verification, ideally as a requirement, before winning candidates can be sworn into office.
- **Apply certain limits on campaign spending** to equalise the playing field among candidates of diverse backgrounds and access to resources.

Strengthening accountability mechanisms

The cost of politics in Indonesia is mainly driven by money politics and weak electoral integrity. As such, election management bodies—comprised of KPU, Bawaslu, and DKPP—are the ultimate duty-bearers responsible for strengthening accountability across all election stages. In addition to election management bodies, all relevant stakeholders interested in promoting fair and free elections, from civil society, academia, political parties, the media, and public institutions must collaborate to champion anti-corruption efforts to counter money politics.

Progress could be made in this area by adopting the following recommendations:

- Bawaslu to treat public complaints professionally and with a sense of urgency and incentivise **public participation in monitoring money politics**.
- KPU and Bawaslu to demand compliance from political parties and candidates to **report campaign spending accurately and timely** and enforce punitive measures on those who fail to meet this regulation.
- KPU, Bawaslu, and DKPP to cooperate closely with PPATK to **investigate suspicious financial activities** regarding political financing during the election cycle.
- DKPP and Bawaslu to establish **proper mechanisms to counter potential conflicts of interest** in electoral integrity violation investigation, especially considering that election management officials are often implicated in such cases.
- KPU to **uphold the legal mandate of gender quotas** in political party nomination, especially noting the strong deterrent effect created by KPU's regulation for the 2019 election which disqualified non-compliant political parties from the elections.
- KPU to improve the **transparency, accountability, and oversight in vote counting and verification** across all stages and levels. The **use of digital tools** such as SIREKAP in 2024 indicates an urgent need for technical and system improvements.

- **Optimise collaborative civic education** efforts, inclusive of CSOs, media, representative institutions and bodies, outside campaign periods, improve popular understanding about how lawmakers and the executive should represent citizen aspirations in policymaking processes.
- Support the media and CSOs to **intensify coverage of electoral fraud and money politics** to apply pressure on perpetrators and prevent the normalisation of money politics in elections. Notably, DKPP has often **cited media reports** in their rulings of ethical violation cases.

References

- ¹ Yuniarto, T. 2024. Pemilihan Umum 2024 dalam Angka. Kompas. 7 January. <https://kompaspedia.kompas.id/baca/paparan-topik/pemilihan-umum-2024-dalam-angka>.
- ² Prihatini, E. 2020. Islam, Parties, and Women's Political Nomination in Indonesia. *Politics & Gender*, 16(3), 637–659.
- ³ Feulner, F. 2024. The Indonesian House of Representatives and its role during democratic regression. *The Theory and Practice of Legislation*, 12(2), 229–251.
- ⁴ Aspinall, E., & Berenschot, W. 2019. *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia*. Cornell University Press; Warburton, E. 2024. Private Power and Public Office: The Rise of Business Politicians in Indonesia. *Critical Asian Studies*, 56(2), 184–206.
- ⁵ Hicken, A., & Simmons, J. W. 2008. The Personal Vote and the Efficacy of Education Spending. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1), 109–124; Virananda, I. G. S., Dartanto, T., & Wijaya, B. D. 2021. Does Money Matter for Electability? Lesson Learned From the 2014 Legislative Election in Indonesia. *Sage Open*, 11(4), 1–14.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Wardani, S. B. E., & Subekti, V. S. 2021. Political Dynasties and Women Candidates in Indonesia's 2019 Election. *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 40(1), 28–49.
- ⁸ These were the United Development Party, an alliance of Islamic-based political parties; the Indonesian Democratic Party, a coalition of nationalist political parties; and the Party of Functional Groups, initially a military-formed social organisation which quickly transformed into a political party.
- ⁹ See Law No. 7/1953 on the Election of Constituent Assembly Members and Members of the People's Representative Council.
- ¹⁰ Cakra Wikara Indonesia. 2022. Menyoal Data Representasi Perempuan di Lima Ranah. CWI. <https://cakrawikara.id/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Buku-Menyoal-Data-Representasi-Perempuan-Edisi-Revisi-05042022-FINAL-Copy.pdf>.
- ¹¹ Prastiwi, D. 2024. Perolehan Kursi Perempuan di DPR RI Periode 2024-2029 Disebut Tertinggi dalam Sejarah. *Liputan 6*. 13 October. <https://www.liputan6.com/news/read/5747229/perolehan-kursi-perempuan-di-dpr-ri-periode-2024-2029-disebut-tertinggi-dalam-sejarah>.
- ¹² White, S., Warburton, E., Pramashavira, Hendrawan, A., & Aspinall, E. (2023). Voting against Women: Political Patriarchy, Islam, and Representation in Indonesia. *Politics & Gender*, 20(2), 391–421.
- ¹³ Sakti, R. E. 2024. Potret Kekerabatan Politik dalam Wajah DPR Hasil Pemilu 2024. Kompas. 8 October. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/10/09/potret-kekerabatan-politik-dalam-wajah-dpr-hasil-pemilu-2024>.
- ¹⁴ Cakra Wikara Indonesia. 2022. Menyoal Data Representasi Perempuan di Lima Ranah. CWI. <https://cakrawikara.id/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Buku-Menyoal-Data-Representasi-Perempuan-Edisi-Revisi-05042022-FINAL-Copy.pdf>.
- ¹⁵ Jalalzai, F., & Rincker, M. 2018. Blood is Thicker than Water: Family Ties to Political Power Worldwide. *Historical Social Research*, 43(4), 54–72.
- ¹⁶ Derichs, C., Fleschenberg, A., & Hüstebeck, M. 2006. Gendering moral capital: Morality as a political asset and strategy of top female politicians in Asia. *Critical Asian Studies*, 38(3), 245–270.
- ¹⁷ Priambada, Y. B. 2024. Sebagian Besar Anggota Parlemen Muda Terafiliasi Dinasti Politik. Kompas. 2 October. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/10/02/sebagian-besar-anggota-parlemen-muda-terafiliasi-dinasti-politik>.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Priambada, Y. B. 2024. Maraknya Dinasti Politik dan Pengusaha di Parlemen. Kompas. 1 October. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2024/10/01/maraknya-dinasti-politik-dan-pengusaha-di-parlemen>.
- ²⁰ To run for elective office in Indonesia, one must have completed high school and be at least 21 years of age.
- ²¹ Rahayu, K. Y. 2024. *Optimisme Caleg Muda Menatap Parlemen*. Kompas. 4 January. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2024/01/04/optimisme-caleg-muda-menatap-parlemen>.
- ²² Sulistyono, P. D. 2022. *Menimbang Panjang Pendek Durasi Kampanye Pemilu 2024*. Kompas. 8 May. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2022/05/05/menakar-durasi-masa-kampanye>.
- ²³ The conversion rate of USD 1 being equal to IDR 15,000 is used throughout this report.
- ²⁴ Rahayu, K. Y. & Harbowo, N. 2023. *The political costs of legislative candidates facing the 2024 elections are increasing*. Kompas. 8 December. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/english/2023/12/07/en-biaya-politik-caleg-hadapi-pemilu-2024-membengkak>.
- ²⁵ Ford, M. & Parker, L. (Eds.). 2008. *Women and Work in Indonesia*. Taylor and Francis.
- ²⁶ Naufal, R. 2024. *Politik Nomor Urut 1 Perempuan Caleg*. Rumah Pemilu. 7 February. <https://rumahpemilu.org/politik-nomor-urut-1-perempuan-caleg>.

- ²⁷ Prihatini, E. 2020. *Islam, Parties, and Women's Political Nomination in Indonesia*. *Politics & Gender*, 16(3), 637–659; Sherlock, S. 2004. *The 2004 Indonesian elections: How the system works and what the parties stand for*. Centre for Democratic Institutions.
- ²⁸ Interview with R9, Jakarta, 17 July 2024.
- ²⁹ Interview with R3, Jakarta, 4 July 2024.
- ³⁰ Medical check-up costs vary depending on the hospital and location of the district. For example, in a public hospital in Jakarta it starts from IDR 800,000. But in other areas such as East Kalimantan province, the bill can reach up to IDR 1.5 million, and in Papua the bill can be as high as IDR 2.5 million.
- ³¹ Interview with R7, Jakarta, 28 May 2024.
- ³² Regulation 15 of 2023.
- ³³ Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ³⁴ Virananda, I. G. S., Dartanto, T. & Wijaya, B. D. 2021. *Does Money Matter for Electability? Lesson Learned From the 2014 Legislative Election in Indonesia*. *Sage Open*, 11(4), 1–14.
- ³⁵ The highest level of education attained by about 60% of voters is junior high school. Those with a bachelor's degree comprise only 6.8%, and the capital city Jakarta is the only province where the proportion of this group exceeds 12%. Furthermore, nearly 8 out of 148 million people in the workforce are unemployed.
- ³⁶ Aspinall, E. & Berenschot, W. 2019. *Democracy for Sale: Elections, Clientelism, and the State in Indonesia*. Cornell University Press.; BBC News Indonesia. 2018. "Setoran Rp500 juta dari caleg PPP": Kebutuhan atau syarat yang berlebihan?" BBC. 17 October. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/indonesia-45886460>; Prihatini, E. & Halimatusa'diyah, I. 2024. *Gender, Political Dynasties, and Committee Assignments: Evidence from Indonesia*. *Parliamentary Affairs*, 77(1), 196–214.
- ³⁷ Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ³⁸ Interview with R1, Jakarta, 16 May 2024.
- ³⁹ Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ⁴⁰ In colloquial terms, Indonesians refer to government posts with massive budgets as "wet" sectors, implying an excess in available financial resources. Conversely, those with limited budgets are often referred to as "dry" sectors, implying lack of available financial resources.
- ⁴¹ Interview with R9, Jakarta, 17 July 2024.
- ⁴² Nastitie, D. P. 2024. *Pengalaman dan Basis Konstituen Tingkatkan Persentase Petahana Kembali ke DPR*. Kompas. 25 April. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2024/04/25/persentase-petahana-yang-menjadi-anggota-dpr-meningkat>.
- ⁴³ Interview with R9, Jakarta, 17 July 2024.
- ⁴⁴ Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ⁴⁵ Interview with R6, Jakarta, 13 May 2024.
- ⁴⁶ Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ⁴⁷ Prihatini, E. 2019. *Women's views and experiences of accessing National Parliament: Evidence from Indonesia*. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 74, 84–90.
- ⁴⁸ Interview with R3, Jakarta, 4 July 2024.
- ⁴⁹ Interview with R3, Jakarta, 4 July 2024.
- ⁵⁰ Interview with R8, Jakarta, 19 June 2024.
- ⁵¹ Interview with R2, Jakarta, 3 June 2024.
- ⁵² Interview with R5, Jakarta, 10 July 2024.
- ⁵³ Interview with R8, Jakarta, 19 June 2024.
- ⁵⁴ Interview with R6, Jakarta, 13 May 2024.
- ⁵⁵ Nur, M. F., & Situmorang, A. P. 2024. *Anggota DPR Muda Berkantong Tebal, Bisa Apa untuk Demokrasi?* Tirto.id. 10 October. <https://tirto.id/anggota-dpr-muda-berkantong-tebal-bisa-apa-untuk-demokrasi-g4yY>.
- ⁵⁶ Interview with R8, Jakarta, 19 June 2024.
- ⁵⁷ Statistics Indonesia. 2024.
- ⁵⁸ UN Women. 2024. Facts and figures: Women's leadership and political participation. UN Women. 2 October. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/leadership-and-political-participation/facts-and-figures>.
- ⁵⁹ Sulisty, P. D. 2023. *Saksi Parpol, Ujung Tombak Pengawal Suara dalam Pemilu*. Kompas. 25 January. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2023/01/22/saksi-parpol-ujung-tombak-pengawal-suara-dalam-pemilu>.
- ⁶⁰ Fauzi, M. P. 2018. *Ketum PPP Nilai Biaya Politik Mahal Bikin Politisi Korup*. Detik. 27 April. <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-3994380/ketum-ppp-nilai-biaya-politik-mahal-bikin-politisi-korup>.
- ⁶¹ Sulisty, P. D. 2023. *Politik Biaya Tinggi, Korupsi, dan Sistem Integritas Parpol*. Kompas. 26 October. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/polhuk/2023/10/16/politik-biaya-tinggi-korupsi-dan-sistem-integritas-parpol>.
- ⁶² Akbar, F. & Susilo, E. 2024. *Imbas Biaya Politik Mahal, DPR Didominasi Politisi Pebisnis*. Jawa Pos. 4 October. <https://www.jawapos.com/politik/015159632/imbis-biaya-politik-mahal-dpr-didominasi-politisi-pebisnis>.

⁶³ BBC News Indonesia. 2024. *Ambang batas parlemen berubah mulai Pileg 2029, apakah benar PSI akan diuntungkan?* [Does PSI get an unfair advantage with the new parliamentary threshold for 2029 elections?], *BBC News*. 1 March. <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/c0d3nwzrx7go>.

⁶⁴ Further discussion is required between parliament and the government to assess the possibility to separate elections by branches of government. For example, elections for the executive branch (such as president and head of local governments) can be held simultaneously. Meanwhile, for legislative branch, the election for DPR RI and DPRD can be held in a different day. This is particularly crucial as respondents highlighted the unequal playing field for candidates representing presidential and vice-presidential pair that is supported by the ruling government. Also, the separation between presidential and legislative elections will allow voters to focus more on legislative candidates and political debates that they may bring.

Annex 1

Table 3: Comparative aspects of Indonesia’s electoral systems 1999–2024

| Aspect | 1999 | 2004 | 2009 | 2014 | 2019 | 2024 |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|----------------|------|------|
| Framework | Law No. 12/2003 | Law No. 10/2008 | Law No. 8/2012 | Law No. 7/2017 | | |
| System | Proportional representation | | | | | |
| Nomination List | Semi Open-List | Open-List | | | | |
| Affirmative Action | Parties must consider at least 30% of women in the ballots. | Parties must include at least 30% of women with a zipper system that guarantees women candidates being placed in one of every three spots on the ballots. | | | | |
| Vote Casting | Voters punch a hole on the ballot, either next to the party logo and candidate’s name OR just the party logo. | Voters mark the ballot once either on the party logo OR the candidate’s name. | Voters punch a hole on the ballot next to the party logo or number and/or the candidate’s name. | | | |
| Parliamentary threshold | None | 2.5% | 3.5% | 4% | | |
| Determination of Elected Candidates | Candidates are elected if they reach the voter divisor (BPP). Remaining seats are decided based on position on the ballot. | Those who obtain at least 30% of the BPP are elected. The remaining seats are decided based on position on the ballot. | Those who receive the highest number of votes are elected. | | | |

Annex 2

Table 4: Salary and allowances for Member of Parliaments
in accordance with Finance Minister Decree No. S-520/MK.02/2015

| No. | Description | Chairs | Vice chairs | MPs |
|--|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| A | Fixed salary and allowances | Fixed monthly sum in IDR | | |
| 1 | Basic pay (BP) | 5,040,000 | 4,620,000 | 4,200,000 |
| 2 | Spousal's allowance (10% of BP) | 504,000 | 462,000 | 420,000 |
| 3 | Children's allowance (2% of BP for max. 2 children) | 201,600 | 184,800 | 168,000 |
| 4 | Meeting subsistence | | | 2,000,000 |
| 5 | Position allowance | 18,900,000 | 15,600,000 | 9,700,000 |
| 6 | Monthly rice allowance | | | 39,090 |
| 7 | Income tax (Article 21) allowance | | | 2,699,813 |
| B | Benefits | Fixed monthly sum in IDR | | |
| 1 | Honour subsistence | 6,690,000 | 6,450,000 | 5,580,000 |
| 2 | Intensive communication subsistence | 16,468,000 | 16,009,000 | 15,554,000 |
| 3 | Budget and oversight subsistence | 5,250,000 | 4,500,000 | 3,750,000 |
| 4 | Utilities subsistence | | | 7,700,000 |
| 5 | Assistant to MP | | | 2,250,000 |
| 6 | Additionally, each MP is entitled to a car loan facility of IDR 70,000,000 per period (5-year term) | | | |
| Monthly Take Home Pay (A1-A7 + B1-B5) | | 67,703,413 | 62,475,613 | 54,021,813 |
| C | Travel Subsistence | Fixed daily limit in IDR | | |
| 1 | a. Daily subsistence (Tier I regions) | | | 500,000 |
| | b. Daily subsistence (Tier II regions) | | | 400,000 |
| 2 | a. Representation subsistence (Tier I regions) | | | 400,000 |
| | b. Representation subsistence (Tier II regions) | | | 300,000 |
| D | Housing Facilities | Fixed yearly limit in IDR | | |
| 1 | a. Maintenance (Kalibata Complex, South Jakarta) | | | 3,000,000 |
| | b. Maintenance (Ulujami Complex, West Jakarta) | | | 5,000,000 |
| 2 | Full home furnishing | | | <i>Provided in-kind</i> |
| E | Healthcare benefits | | | |
| 1 | Each MP is entitled to medical insurance and funeral coverage | | | |
| 2 | Each MP is entitled to death benefits (3x monthly salary) and accident benefits (6x monthly salary) | | | |
| F | Retirement Funds | Fixed monthly figures in IDR | | |
| 1 | Pension (60% of BP) | 3,024,000 | 2,772,000 | 2,520,000 |
| 2 | Monthly rice allowance | | | 39,090 |

Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) is the UK public body dedicated to supporting democracy around the world. Operating internationally, WFD works with parliaments, political parties, and civil society groups as well as on elections to help make political systems fairer, more inclusive and accountable.

 www.wfd.org

 [@WFD_Democracy](https://twitter.com/WFD_Democracy)

 [@WFD_Democracy](https://www.instagram.com/WFD_Democracy)

 [**Westminster Foundation
for Democracy \(WFD\)**](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Westminster-Foundation-for-Democracy-(WFD))



Scan here to sign up to WFD news



Westminster Foundation for Democracy is an executive Non-departmental Public Body sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office.



Foreign, Commonwealth
& Development Office