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GENERAL NOTICES • ALGEMENE KENNISGEWINGS

PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

NOTICE 3981 OF 2026

MR JS MALEMA, MP

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO INTRODUCE A PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL AND INVITATION FOR COMMENT ON THE DRAFT ELECTORAL MATTERS AMENDMENT BILL, 2026

Mr JS Malema, MP acting in accordance with section 73(2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ("Constitution"), intends to introduce the Electoral Matters Amendment Bill, 2026, in Parliament. An explanatory summary of the Bill is hereby published in accordance with Rule 276(1)*(c)* of the Rules of the National Assembly (9th Edition).

While the Electoral Act, 1998 (Act No. 73 of 1998), permits voter registration from the age of 16, registration remains a voluntary process dependent on individual initiative and voter registration drives organised by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). This has led to large-scale exclusion, particularly of young people. A steady and troubling decline in voter turnout is compounded by low levels of registration and high levels of migration. Constant movement makes it difficult for young, working-age South Africans to update their registration details, leading to further exclusion. The IEC has sought to address these challenges through registration weekends, awareness campaigns, and digital registration platforms, which are costly and insufficient.

The Electoral Matters Amendment Bill, 2026, ("draft Bill") therefore seeks to shift the burden of registration from individual initiative to the state, using existing population data to ensure inclusion through automated voter registration ("AVR"). International comparison shows that countries with AVR processes show higher levels of registration completeness, improved equity in voter rolls, and greater participation among typically under-represented groups, such as youth and the poor. South Africa, with its advanced civil registration and identity systems, is well-placed to adopt this reform.

The draft Bill introduces an AVR process so as to increase voter turnout, reduce the number of unregistered but eligible voters and decrease the cost of awareness drives. In this regard the draft Bill proposes amendments to the Electoral Commission Act, 1996 (Act No. 51 of 1996), the Identification Act, 1997 (Act No. 68 of 1997), the Electoral Act, 1998 (Act No. 73 of 1998), and the Local Government: Municipal Electoral Act, 2000 (Act No. 27 of 2000). The AVR includes compiling and maintaining a database to which information from the population register is

transferred with the use of technology. Part of compiling and maintaining the voters' roll would include transferring information from this database to the voters' roll, upon a person turning 18 years old. The draft Bill further provides for:

- Reporting on the AVR processes and tabling of such reports in the Assembly;
- the inclusion of information in the population register that emanate from actions taken in terms of the Mental Health Care Act, 2002 (Act No. 17 of 2002), to inform AVR;
- AVR despite a person not having applied for, or being in possession of an identity document or a temporary certificate at the age of 16;
- the Chief Electoral Commission to notify a voter of their inclusion on the voters' roll, to request the confirmation or correction of their place of residency, and to caution about the need to have an identity document in order to vote;
- alternative measures where a person failed to correct or confirm their place of residency so that either the information received from the population register, or section 38(8), applies;
- electronic publication of the voters' roll;
- offences related to undue influence and impersonation connected to AVR processes;
- a code regulating AVR and conciliation of disputes and complaints related to that code;
- determination of the effectiveness of the amendment including a timeframe for implementation of AVR, reports on progress, and subsequent reports to analyse voter registration, voter turnout and costs for the future elections; and
- further matters connected to the operations of an automated voter registration process.

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, P O Box 15 Cape Town 8000, or emailed to AVR@parliament.gov.za and copied to chiefwhip@effonline.org

Copies of the Electoral Matters Amendment Bill, 2026, may, after introduction, be obtained from:
Economic Freedom Fighters
PO Box 15, Cape Town, 8000
Attention: Ms Gugu Zintle Mgwebi
Telephone: 071 142 1663
E-mail: chiefwhip@effonline.org

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