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Parliament should Support Gender Quotas

Civil society organizations urge the Parliament of Georgia to support during the plenary session legislative initiative backed by 37,455 signatures to ensure equal political representation of women and men.

On 12 June 2017, a legislative initiative was submitted to the Parliament of Georgia by 37,455 voters, introducing mandatory requirement for parties and blocs to prepare gender balanced lists for elections where every other candidate is of a different sex, and replace any elected member who abandons his/her mandate with the next successful candidate on the party list who is of the same sex. The proposed model is a temporary special measure to correct gender imbalance. If approved, share of women in the 2020 Parliament will be at least 26%.

Women account for [52.3%](#) of Georgian population while their representation in elected offices is disproportionately low. In the last parliamentary elections women were able to secure only 16% of seats in the legislature and they account for 13.46% of elected members of Sakrebulo. With such figures Georgia is lagging far behind developed countries in terms of women political representation. Despite the slight increase in the number women in elective office over the recent years, at current pace it will take decades to correct the gender imbalance in legislative and local self-government bodies.

Experience shows that women have to overcome important social and economic obstacles to be nominated as candidates for elective office. Women representation is further discouraged by the existing parallel electoral system in Georgia.

Meaningful measures should be taken to overcome the existing barriers. Gender quotas in proportional election lists is a temporary legislative measure to ensure equal participation of women and men in politics. [According to the polls](#), majority of Georgian population believes that number of women in Parliament and in self-

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governing bodies is very low and support mandatory gender quotas, as evidenced by over 37,000 signatures.

Under the amendments made to the Constitution in 2017, Georgia committed itself to ensuring elimination of inequality between men and women and achieving substantive equality, including by taking special measures. The obligation to ensure gender equality is established by many international agreements, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). In its [recommendation](#) prepared after Georgia submitted the fourth periodic report on the women rights situation in the country, the CEDAW committee states that Georgia should take meaningful steps to strengthen gender equality, including by taking mandatory measures to improve women participation. In addition, the updated [EU-Georgia Association Agenda](#) contains new obligations for Georgia, including the obligation to take active steps towards increasing women representation in political life and decision-making process.

The draft law provides a historic opportunity for Parliament to help increase women political participation. We are pleased that during committee-level discussions the draft law as supported by the legal affairs, human rights protection and regional development committees.

We urge Parliament to discuss the legislative initiative during the plenary session in a timely manner. It is imperative that the authorities and opposition parties demonstrate a clear political will for equality between women and men and support the legislative initiative of Georgian citizens.

1. International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy
2. Georgian Young Lawyers' Association
3. Partnership for Human Rights
4. Women's Fund Georgia
5. Women's Political Resource Center

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6. Union Sapari
7. Civil Development Agency
8. Equality Movement
9. Human Rights Education and Monitoring Center
10. Green Alternative
11. Open Society Georgia Foundation
12. Network of Journalists for Gender Equality
13. Young Feminists' Initiative Group
14. Public Initiatives Group
15. Women for Regional Development
16. Telavi Gender Media Center
17. Rustavi Gender Media Center
18. Gori Gender Media Center
19. Kutaisi Gender Media Center
20. Zugdidi Gender Media Center
21. Ozurgeti Gender Media Center
22. Batumi Gender Media Center
23. Akhaltsikhe Gender Media Center
24. Economic Policy Research Center
25. Transparency International - Georgia
26. The Hague Club

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27. Women Engage for a Common Future (WECF) Georgia
28. Studio-mobile Accent on Action
29. Society of Democratic Women of Marneuli
30. International Association Women and Business
31. Association Women of Multinational Georgia
32. Network of Centers for Democratic Engagement
33. Initiative Group Women for Georgia
34. Association of Education and Labor
35. Helping Hand
36. Platform for New Opportunities
37. Women's Vision
38. Women from Georgia
39. For Rights and Education
40. Georgian Farmers Association
41. Center for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Victims of Torture
42. Civic Development Association of Georgia
43. Institute of Democracy
44. Union of Scientists of Imereti Region Spektri
45. Nabiji Kharagauli
46. Multinational Georgia
47. Demosi

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48. Association Art for Public Interests
49. Dusheti Development Fund
49. Friendship Bridge Kartlosi
50. Guria Youth Resource Center
51. For the Better Future
52. National Network for Protection against Violence Mtskheta-Mtianeti Regional Committee
53. Center of civil Society and Democracy Development
54. Association Atinati
55. Akhaltsikhe Youth Center
56. Racha Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti Self-Government Resource Center
57. Samtskhe-Javakheti Media Center
58. We - for Healthy Future
59. Association Dea
60. Association Tolerant
61. Social Monitoring and Research Center
62. Apkhazinterkonti Fund
63. Saunje
64. Kakheti Regional Development Fund
65. Tkibuli District Development Fund
66. Community Union Nukriani

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67. Kutaisi Information Center
68. Our Pshavi
69. Civil Activity and Equality Center
70. Regional Development Center
71. Biliki
72. Association Imedi, movement of IDP women for peace
73. Union for Civil Development
74. Association Zekari
75. Union of Young Scientists Intelekti
76. Green Sector
77. Good Governance and Education Foundation
78. Democracy and Effective Governance Center
79. Center for Development of International Business and Promotion of Investments
80. House of Free Journalists
81. Georgian Reforms Association
82. Association Zekari
83. Young Scientists' Club of Ozurgeti
84. Association Vejini
85. Lanckhuti Information Center
86. Kvemo Kartli Public Information Center
87. Association Lore

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88. Sika – Georgian Association for Educational Initiatives
89. Imereti Regional Organization of PWDs for Complete Life
90. House of Georgian Democracy
91. Cultural Humanitarian Foundation Sukhumi
92. Gori Youth Movement Time is Now
93. Association of Civil Education Lecturers Sela
94. Young Greens of Georgia
95. Development and Migration Institute
96. Taso Foundation
97. Young socialists
98. Association of IDP Women Tankhmoba
99. Union of Azerbaijani Women of Georgia
100. Gori Community Development Center
102. Gori Club of Photographers
103. Gorri Community Radio Mosaic
104. Georgian Media Group
105. Welfare and Development Center of Georgia
106. Shida Kartli Information Center
107. Union Step to Future
108. Association Women and Development
109. Article 42 of the Constitution

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110. Institute for Development of Freedom of Information
111. Penal Reform International – Georgia
112. Iare Pekhit
113. Education Center
114. Center for Development of Civic Engagement – Co-Participant
115. Families against Discrimination
116. Coalition of Organizations of PWDs and Parents – Movement for Change
117. Down Syndrome Association of Georgia and Social Enterprise Babale
118. Human Rights Development Foundation