
Legislative Council (Amendment) Bill 2011

Contents

Clause		Page
Part 1		
Preliminary		
1.	Short title and commencement	C3229
Part 2		
Amendments to Legislative Council Ordinance		
2.	Legislative Council Ordinance amended	C3231
3.	Section 12 amended (How long Members are to hold office)	C3231
4.	Section 13 amended (Acceptance of office as a Member)	C3231
5.	Section 35A added	C3233
	35A. Filling of vacancy in membership of Legislative Council: geographical constituencies and District Council (second) functional constituency.....	C3233
6.	Section 36 amended (By-election to be held to fill vacancy in membership of Legislative Council)	C3239
7.	Section 58A added	C3239
	58A. Precedence list for geographical constituencies and District Council (second) functional constituency.....	C3239

Clause	Page
8. Section 61 amended (Election may be questioned only by election petition made on specified grounds).....	C3245
9. Section 63 amended (Who may be made respondent to election petition)	C3247
10. Section 65 amended (Period within which election petition is to be lodged)	C3249
11. Section 67 amended (Court to determine election petition)....	C3249
12. Section 78 amended (Appointment of Returning Officers and assistants).....	C3251

Part 3

Amendments to Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order

13. Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order amended	C3253
14. Schedule 1 amended (Provisions excluded from application of section 5 of Ordinance).....	C3253
15. Schedule 2 amended (Provisions excluded from application of section 6 of Ordinance).....	C3253

A BILL

To

Amend the Legislative Council Ordinance to provide for the filling of any vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Council in any geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency by a replacement mechanism in certain circumstances and to make related amendments to the Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order.

Enacted by the Legislative Council.

Part 1

Preliminary

1. Short title and commencement

- (1) This Ordinance may be cited as the Legislative Council (Amendment) Ordinance 2011.
 - (2) This Ordinance (except this section and sections 2 and 7) comes into operation on the commencement of the term of office of the fifth term of office of the Legislative Council in 2012.
 - (3) This section and sections 2 and 7 come into operation on 1 September 2012.
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Part 2

Amendments to Legislative Council Ordinance

2. Legislative Council Ordinance amended

The Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) is amended as set out in sections 3 to 12.

3. Section 12 amended (How long Members are to hold office)

After section 12(2)—

Add

“(3) Subject to sections 13 and 15, a person who becomes a Member under section 35A—

(a) holds office from the date on which the declaration is made under section 35A(5) in relation to the person; and

(b) vacates office at the end of the term of office of the Legislative Council during which the declaration is made.”.

4. Section 13 amended (Acceptance of office as a Member)

(1) Section 13(1)—

Repeal

“A”

Substitute

“Subject to subsection (5), a”.

(2) After section 13(4)—

Add

“(5) This section does not apply to a person who accepts office as a Member under section 35A.”.

Part 2
Clause 5

5. Section 35A added

After section 35—

Add

“35A. Filling of vacancy in membership of Legislative Council: geographical constituencies and District Council (second) functional constituency

- (1) This section applies if—
 - (a) the office of a Member returned for any geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency becomes vacant under section 15 otherwise than within the 4 months preceding the end of the Legislative Council’s current term of office; and
 - (b) there is a precedence list for that constituency.
- (2) If the Clerk to the Legislative Council declares under section 35 the existence of a vacancy in the membership of that Council in any geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency, the Returning Officer appointed for the constituency concerned must comply with subsection (3) in relation to the vacancy.
- (3) The Returning Officer must deliver a notice to the person who ranks highest on the precedence list for the constituency concerned.
- (4) A person to whom a notice is delivered under subsection (3) may, within 7 days after the date on which the notice is delivered, signify his or her acceptance of office as a Member by a written confirmation sent to the Returning Officer.
- (5) If the Returning Officer—

Part 2
Clause 5

- (a) receives a confirmation from a person in accordance with subsection (4); and
 - (b) determines, upon an inquiry, that the person is eligible to become a Member,
- the Returning Officer must, as soon as practicable, publicly declare that the person becomes a Member and upon the declaration the person becomes a Member.
- (6) For the purposes of subsection (5), a person is eligible to become a Member if the person—
 - (a) does not fall within paragraph (a), (b), (c), (g), (h) or (i) of section 39(1);
 - (b) on the date on which the confirmation is sent by the person under subsection (4), is not serving a sentence of imprisonment;
 - (c) does not, had there been an election on the date referred to in paragraph (b) for the constituency concerned, fall within paragraph (f) of section 39(1);
 - (d) has not been convicted in the manner set out in subparagraph (i), (ii), (iii) or (iv) of section 39(1)(e) after the last election conducted for the constituency concerned; and
 - (e) has not been found under the Mental Health Ordinance (Cap. 136) to be incapable, by reason of mental incapacity, of managing and administering his or her property and affairs.
 - (7) If a vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Council is not filled by a person to whom a notice is delivered under subsection (3)—

Part 2
Clause 5

- (a) the precedence list for the constituency concerned is revised by removing the name of the person from the list; and
 - (b) the Returning Officer must comply with subsections (3) and (5) in relation to the vacancy and to the list as revised.
- (8) For all purposes of any Ordinance—
- (a) a person who becomes a Member under subsection (5) is to be regarded as a Member elected as such;
 - (b) the process through which the person becomes a Member under this section is to be regarded as an election; and
 - (c) the declaration made in relation to the person under subsection (5) is to be regarded as a declaration that the person has been elected as a Member.
- (9) If a vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Council to which this section applies is not filled by the operation of the preceding subsections of this section, the Returning Officer must publicly declare that the vacancy is not filled under this section.
- (10) A Returning Officer who makes a declaration under subsection (5) or (9) must publish the declaration in the Gazette.
- (11) In this section, a reference to a precedence list for a constituency means a precedence list published under section 58A in relation to that constituency following the last election conducted for that constituency.
- (12) For the purposes of subsection (3)—

Part 2
Clause 6

- (a) if there is only one person on a precedence list, the person is regarded as ranking highest on the list; and
- (b) a person on the list who is for the time being a Member is to be regarded as not being on the list.”.

6. Section 36 amended (By-election to be held to fill vacancy in membership of Legislative Council)

(1) Section 36(1)(a), before “on the”—

Add

“unless section 35A applies,”.

(2) After section 36(1)(a)—

Add

“(aa) on the making of a declaration under subsection (9) of section 35A that a vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Council is not filled under that section;”.

7. Section 58A added

After section 58—

Add

“58A. Precedence list for geographical constituencies and District Council (second) functional constituency

(1) The Returning Officer appointed for a geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency must, as soon as practicable after the completion of the counting of votes in respect of a general election—

Part 2
Clause 7

- (a) compile a precedence list for that constituency in accordance with subsections (2), (3), (4) and (5); and
 - (b) publish the list by notice in the Gazette.
- (2) A precedence list compiled under subsection (1) for a constituency is to consist of—
- (a) where any list of candidates for that constituency in the relevant general election has obtained any number of valid votes but has no candidate who is duly elected in that election, the name of—
 - (i) if there is only one candidate on the list of candidates, the only candidate; or
 - (ii) if there are 2 or more candidates on the list of candidates, the candidate who ranks first on the list of candidates; and
 - (b) where any list of candidates for that constituency in the relevant general election—
 - (i) has any candidate who is duly elected in that election;
 - (ii) has any candidate who is not duly elected in that election; and
 - (iii) has any remaining number of votes which did not return a candidate under section 49(8)(a),

the name of the candidate who is not duly elected and who ranks immediately after the candidate who is, or the candidates who are, duly elected on the list of candidates.

Part 2
Clause 7

- (3) Subject to subsection (5), on a precedence list the names of the persons are to be ranked in order of priority according to the number of votes those persons respectively have with the person who has the largest number of votes ranked first.
- (4) For the purposes of subsection (3)—
 - (a) a person who is a candidate referred to in subsection (2)(a)(i) or (ii) is to be regarded as having the votes obtained by the list of candidates in which the name of the person appears;
 - (b) a person who is a candidate referred to in subsection (2)(b) is to be regarded as having a number of votes that is equal to the remaining number of votes referred to in subsection (2)(b)(iii) obtained by the list of candidates in which the name of the person appears.
- (5) If 2 or more persons have the same number of votes under subsection (4), the Returning Officer must determine the order of priority of those persons on the precedence list by drawing lots.
- (6) A precedence list published under subsection (1)—
 - (a) is, if any person whose name is included in the list becomes a Member under section 35A, revised by removing that name from the list;
 - (b) is, if any person whose name is included in the list dies, revised by removing that name from the list; and
 - (c) is also revised in the circumstances specified in section 35A(7)(a).
- (7) If all the names included in a precedence list published under subsection (1) have been removed from the list under subsection (6)(a) or (b) or section 35A(7), the list ceases to exist for the purposes of this Ordinance.

Part 2
Clause 8

- (8) A precedence list published for a constituency ceases to exist for the purposes of this Ordinance upon the publication of another precedence list for that constituency during the same term of office of the Legislative Council.
- (9) If a by-election is conducted for any geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency, this section applies as if each reference in this section to a general election is substituted by a reference to that by-election.”.

8. Section 61 amended (Election may be questioned only by election petition made on specified grounds)

- (1) Section 61, heading, after “**Election**”—

Add

“etc.”.

- (2) After section 61(1)(a)(i)—

Add

“(ia) (in the case of a person who becomes a Member under section 35A) the person is not eligible to become a Member under section 35A(6); or”.

- (3) After section 61(2)—

Add

“(2A) A decision of a Returning Officer under section 58A as to—

(a) whether to include the name of a person in a precedence list; or

(b) the ranking of a person on a precedence list,

may be questioned only by an election petition lodged under section 62 on any of the grounds specified in subsection (2B).

Part 2
Clause 9

- (2B) The grounds are—
- (a) the ground that a person whose name is included in the precedence list was ineligible to be, or was disqualified from being, a candidate at the relevant election;
 - (b) the ground that corrupt or illegal conduct was engaged in by or in respect of any person whose name is included in the precedence list at or in connection with the relevant election;
 - (c) the ground that corrupt or illegal conduct was generally prevalent at or in connection with the relevant election; and
 - (d) the ground that material irregularity occurred in relation to—
 - (i) the relevant election;
 - (ii) the polling or counting of votes at the relevant election; or
 - (iii) the compilation of the precedence list.”.

9. Section 63 amended (Who may be made respondent to election petition)

After section 63(1)—

Add

“(1A) If—

- (a) the inclusion of the name of a person in a precedence list published under section 58A; or
- (b) the ranking of a person on a precedence list published under section 58A,

is questioned by an election petition, the person and the Returning Officer who published the list may be made a respondent to the petition.

Part 2

Clause 10

(1B) If the exclusion of the name of a person from a precedence list published under section 58A is questioned by an election petition, the Returning Officer who publish the list may be made a respondent to the petition.”.

10. Section 65 amended (Period within which election petition is to be lodged)

(1) Section 65—

Renumber the section as section 65(1).

(2) After section 65(1)—

Add

“(2) An election petition questioning—

- (a) the inclusion of the name of a person in a precedence list published under section 58A;
- (b) the exclusion of the name of a person from a precedence list published under section 58A; or
- (c) the ranking of a person on a precedence list published under section 58A,

may be lodged only during the period of 2 months following the date on which the list is published.”.

11. Section 67 amended (Court to determine election petition)

After section 67(2)—

Add

“(2A) At the end of the trial of an election petition that relates to the inclusion of the name of a person in, or the exclusion of the name of a person from, a precedence list published under section 58A, the Court must determine whether the name is to be included in the list.

Part 2

Clause 12

(2B) At the end of the trial of an election petition that relates to the ranking of a person on a precedence list published under section 58A, the Court must determine whether the ranking of the person on the list is correct and, if not correct, what is the correct ranking.”.

12. Section 78 amended (Appointment of Returning Officers and assistants)

Section 78(1)—

Repeal

everything after “Commission to be”

Substitute

“necessary—

- (a) to enable an election to be held in the constituency; and
 - (b) for the operation of section 35A.”.
-

Part 3

Amendments to Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order

13. Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order amended

The Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order (Cap. 553 sub. leg. B) is amended as set out in sections 14 and 15.

14. Schedule 1 amended (Provisions excluded from application of section 5 of Ordinance)

Schedule 1, item 60, column 3, after “26(6)” —

Add

“, 35A(3) and (4)”.

15. Schedule 2 amended (Provisions excluded from application of section 6 of Ordinance)

Schedule 2, item 19, column 3, after “14(2)” —

Add

“, 35A(3) and (4)”.

Explanatory Memorandum
Paragraph 1

Explanatory Memorandum

The object of this Bill is to introduce a replacement mechanism under which a vacancy in the membership of the Legislative Council arising during the term of office of the Legislative Council in any geographical constituency or the District Council (second) functional constituency is filled by a person from a precedence list compiled in the last general election.

2. Clause 1 sets out the short title and provides for commencement. The proposed mechanism is to be put in place at the commencement of the term of office of the fifth term of office of the Legislative Council in 2012.
3. Clause 3 amends section 12 of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) (*the principal Ordinance*) to provide for the term of office of a Member of the Legislative Council (*Member*) who fills a vacancy under the proposed mechanism.
4. Clause 4 introduces a consequential amendment to section 13 of the principal Ordinance.
5. Clause 5 adds a new section to the principal Ordinance to provide for the operation of the proposed mechanism. If a vacancy arises, the Returning Officer must notify the person who ranks highest on the precedence list prepared for the constituency concerned in the last election. The persons on the precedence list are candidates in the last election who were not elected but ranked highest among the candidates who were not elected on the lists of candidates they were respectively on in that election. The order of priority of the persons is determined by the number of votes their lists obtained in that election.
6. If the person who ranks highest on the precedence list accepts office and is eligible to become a Member, the person fills the vacancy and becomes a Member. If the person does not accept

Explanatory Memorandum
Paragraph 7

office or is not eligible to become a Member, the Returning Officer must notify the person who ranks next highest on the list. If necessary, the Returning Officer must repeat the process until the vacancy is filled. If the persons on the precedence list are exhausted and the vacancy cannot be filled, a by-election will be held (see clause 6).

7. Clause 7 adds a new section to the principal Ordinance to provide for the compilation and publication of a precedence list.
8. Clauses 8 to 11 introduce amendments to the provisions in the principal Ordinance which relate to an election petition. A decision made by a Returning Officer as regards the compilation of a precedence list or the eligibility of a person on a precedence list to become a Member may be questioned by an election petition.
9. Clause 12 introduces an amendment to reflect the new responsibility of Returning Officers under the proposed mechanism.
10. Clauses 14 and 15 propose amendments to the Electronic Transactions (Exclusion) Order (Cap. 553 sub. leg. B). The effect is that some documents used in relation to the proposed mechanism have to be in paper form.