

LEAD DEBATE ON

A BILL FOR AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE LICENSING AND REGULATION OF PRIVATE DETECTIVES AND INVESTIGATORS; AND FOR OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED THEREWITH 2018.

BY SENATOR IKE EKWEREMADU, CFR

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, I take the pleasure to lead the debate on a bill for an Act to provide for the licensing and regulation of private detectives and investigators and for other matters which Bill is hereinafter referred to by its short title as the Private Detectives and Investigators Bill 2018.

The bill was read the first time in this hallowed chamber on the 9th March 2017.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, I believe that this distinguished Senate do not need any lecture to appreciate the unfortunate fact that unresolved crime especially high level murder and assassination have long assumed alarming proportions in Nigeria.

The Nigerian Police saddled with the responsibility for investigating crime have in the past few years consistently failed to unravel perpetrators of various crimes ranging from missing persons to armed robberies and assassinations of politically exposed personalities and other well meaning Nigerians. There is no gainsaying that unless some more effort is made to ensure prompt detection of crime our society may gradually slide into wanton destruction and unbridled anarchy.

This bill seeks to inject private sector initiative into detection and investigation of crimes in Nigeria. Private Detectives and Investigators offer services including executive, corporate and celebrity protection, pre-employment verification and individual background profiles and checks.

Criminal investigators also provide assistance in civil liability and personal injury matters, insurance claims and fraud, child custody and protection cases and premarital screening. Increasingly too, they are hired to investigate individuals to prove or disprove infidelity.

The current reforms strategy of mainstreaming private sector initiatives makes the enactment of this bill as imperative as the legal, corporate and financial sectors of our economy will receive enhanced performance as they utilize the services of Private Detectives and Investigators.

THE BILL

The Bill is presented in 17 Sections. Section 1 empowers the Minister of Police Affairs or any other Minister charged with the responsibility of Police matters to issue license to Private Detectives and Investigators. The power of the Minister to make rules and regulations is provided for in Section 13.

Sections 2 – 5 set out the requirements and procedures for application and licensing of Private Detectives and Investigators.

Employee requirements and business practice regulations of practitioners are outlined in Sections 6 and 7 while certain persons, firms and companies were exempted from the operations of the Act in Section 8.

Offences and disciplinary powers of the Minister were provided for in Sections 9 – 11 and 14 while Section 12 provides for private prosecution in certain circumstances.

Gender and other definitions concluded the bill in Sections 15 and 17 respectively.

COST IMPLICATION:

The operation of the bill will not entail any cost at all to the government because no new structures or arrangements will be required. The cost of licensing the private detectives and investigators will be recovered from statutory fees to be paid by applicants.

Conversely, the operation of the bill will generate the much needed employment for our teeming citizens who will carry on business as Private Detectives and Investigators or may be employed by licensed practitioners.

Indeed the availability of an alternative body for detecting crime will most likely engender a healthy strive to perform thus raising the bar on the effectiveness and standard of performance of both the Police and Licensed Private Detectives and Investigators.

Mr. President, Distinguished Colleagues, the urgent need to enhance our public security by prompt and effective crime detection and investigation mechanism cannot be overemphasized. Advanced democracies such as the United States of America are effectively utilizing private sector participation in crime detection and investigation to enhance public safety. May I therefore humbly invite this distinguished Senate to support this bill.

Thank you.

SENATOR IKE EKWEREMADU, CFR