

LONG TITLE: A BILL FOR AN ACT TO MAKE PROVISION FOR THE ENTRENCHMENT IN NIGERIANS, A CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY BEHAVIORAL PATTERN, PROMOTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND RIGHTS, AS WELL AS ENSURE ORDERLINESS, EQUITY, FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE IN THE DISTRIBUTION OF SERVICES AND FOR OTHER RELATED MATTERS

SHORT TITLE: Civic Responsibility Bill, 2016

SPONSOR: Hon. (Dr.) Amuda-Kannike Abubakar G.

BACKGROUND

There is no gainsaying the fact that overtime in Nigeria, lack of civic education and national orientation have led to disorientation. In reaction to this sordid state of affairs, in March 1987, former President Ibrahim Babangida had recommended the establishment of a Directorate for Social Mobilisation (MAMSER) which has today metamorphosed into the modern day National Orientation Agency (NOA) to help rejuvenate our ailing national culture.

Notwithstanding government efforts, recent events have shown that Nigeria is on the verge of losing its much cherished sense of nationalism, cultural identity and hospitality. With the prevailing levels of corruption, indiscipline, disrespect for both elders and the rule of law, less commitment in the society, the current administration saw the imperativeness of a call for re-orientation as the basis of national development and a purposeful future Nigerian state. Hence, the launching of the *change begins with me* slogan.

It is also important to state that in all of these, the school system has a major role to play.

Honorable colleagues, I wish to reiterate here that the level of degeneration of our values has necessitated the call for disciplinary measures against further disregard for unpatriotic behavior. It is only a situation that depicts non-tolerance for indiscipline (prescribing fines and punitive measures) that would guard against jungle justice, outright disregard for national values as well as enhance the foundation and preservation of a patriotic future generation.

DETAILS OF THE BILL

The Bill is divided into 5 parts and 11 Sections. Part I of the Bill provides in section 1, the objective and purpose of the proposed law to include amongst other things, to imbibe a culture of civic responsibility in Nigerians. Section 2 proposes the implementation of the Bill by government agents and particularly suggests that the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps organize efforts towards the enforcement of the provisions of the Bill. Section 3 deals with the application of the Bill by all persons, officials, employees and representatives of government departments and other institutions while section 4 includes the general principle of the Bill to also include creating and sustaining within the society, the awareness of the principles and objectives of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (as amended).

Part II of the Bill i.e. section 5 deals with promotion and propagation of civic education through school curricula and programmes of broadcasting units in the country.

Part III prescribes the queue system i.e. *first come first serve* as a basis for accessing public and other services.

Part IV provides offences and penalties and proposes community service or imprisonment for a term not less than 6 months or to a fine not less than fifty thousand naira or to both imprisonment and fine, as deterrent, particularly to serial offenders. Lastly, Part V provides miscellaneous and supplemental which include regulation of the proposed legislation by the Minister charged with the responsibility of information and national orientation, interpretation and citation or short title of the Bill.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bill underscores the need to reawake a derailed national culture by proposing disciplinary measures to guide Nigerians in their daily behaviours. Recall that in the current Nigerian *jungle* where we live, out of total disregard for other persons who strive to do the right thing by conducting themselves orderly in public places, it is normal practice for a large number of Nigerians to shunt or distort queues and go unpunished since they are seen not to violate extant laws.

In addition, schools and broadcasting units are at liberty to promote civic education. Thus, the bill makes it mandatory for schools and broadcasting units to constantly propagate civic education.

INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

In line with international best practices, the Bill takes reference from the queue systems in the United Kingdom and Japan, while also taking a cue from the civic education policies of the 50 states of the United States of America.

CONCLUSION

The bill if passed into law shall provide a starting point of value and cultural re-orientation in Nigeria. It is therefore anticipated that overtime, future generations shall be birthed into a more sane society that helps to shape moral principles and respect for each other in addition to adequate awareness on what constitutes nationhood.