

October 2024

A BILL FOR AN ACT TO ALTER THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA, 1999 TO PROVIDE FOR SEAT RESERVATION FOR WOMEN IN THE NATIONAL AND STATE HOUSES OF ASSEMBLY; AND FOR RELATED MATTERS (HB 1349)

Sponsor: Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu

Co-Sponsors:		
Hon. Tolani Shagaya	Hon. Khadija Bukar Ibrahim	Hon. Kama Nkemkanma
Hon. Oriyomi A Onanuga	Hon. Jafaru Gambo Leko	Hon. Amobi Godwin Ogah
Hon. Joshua Audu Gana	Hon. M. D. Hassan	Hon. Jonathan Gaza Gbefwi
Hon. Chinwe Clara Nnabuife	Hon. Blessing Onuh	Hon. Francis Waive

BACKGROUND

This analysis reviews the constitution alteration bill to provide for seat reservation for women in the National and State Houses of Assembly. It explores its implications, the concept of affirmative action, and use of temporary special measures to boost the numbers of women in the legislature. It also explores the argument around the potential increase in the cost of governance that will come with the bill if passed and implemented. This includes research into the National and National Assembly budget and impact of additional seats in the legislature on these budgets.

While there would be monetary costs to implementing this proposal, excluding women from governance comes with economic costs. For instance, there is an underutilisation of talent and loss of diverse perspectives and skills in governance when women are not included. This limits innovation and problem-solving, which are crucial for economic competitiveness. Diverse governance leads to better collaboration across sectors and partnerships that can drive economic development. Thus, fostering an inclusive governance structure is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic economic imperative that can yield substantial dividends for societies at large.

I. BILL OBJECTIVE

This is a constitution alteration bill that seeks to remedy the low representation of women in Legislative Houses by providing for the creation of additional separate seats to be contested and filled by only women in the National Assembly and State Houses of Assembly as a temporary measure to promote women's representation. The provision is a temporary special measure as it is subjected to a review after four general election cycles of sixteen years for the purpose of either retaining, increasing, or abolishing the temporary measure.



Funded by
the European Union

This analysis finds that the use of special seats or women-only constituencies is a form of Temporary Special Measure (TSM) that is used by countries to remedy the low numbers of women in legislatures or parliaments. It is also one of the very limited options that best fits with Nigeria's First-Past-the-Post/Plurality electoral system, which makes it near impossible to apply gender quotas.

Temporary Special Measures are designed to achieve a specific goal. They are a response to unfair competition in the electoral space and historical discrimination that women face in politics. They are a “**fast-track measure**” to improved representation and are time bound i.e. they usually have an expiration date once the goal is achieved.

This analysis also finds that while party-based gender quotas/numeric targets can improve the number of women candidates running for office, they are “*nomination-based*” and not “*results based*” meaning that they do not often guarantee increase in numbers in the legislature. The benefits of increased women's benefits are many and while the arguments for this have been robust, there are concerns over the financial implications of adding more seats to the legislature. This analysis finds that cost of additional women members would amount to a less than 1% increase in the National budget and less than 5% increase of the National Assembly Budget.

2. BILL SCOPE AND IMPLICATIONS

a) Increase in the Composition of the Senate

Currently, the composition of the Senate is based on equality of states with each of the 36 states having three senators and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) having only one. The Bill proposes to amend **section 48** of the Constitution, by creating one additional seat in the Senate for each State of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory to be occupied by a woman. If the amendment goes through, each State would be expected to return a total of four Senators while the FCT will return two Senators. This would amount to a total of 37 additional female Senators.

b) Increase in the Composition of the House of Representatives

Section 49 of the Constitution prescribes a total number of 360 members for the House of Representatives. The Bill proposes to amend this section to create one additional seat in the House of Representatives from each State of the Federation and the FCT to be occupied by only women. The implication is that each State will have one woman added to their already existing number totaling 37 additional women Representatives in the House of Representatives.

c) Increase in Composition of the State Houses of Assembly

The Bill proposes to amend **section 91** of the Constitution to add three seats to the number of seats in every State House of Assembly, to be occupied by women only. The three additional women-only seats are to be in accordance with the three Senatorial districts already delineated for each State in the Constitution.

Currently, **section 91** of the Constitution does not prescribe a uniform number of seats for State Assemblies. But it provides that it should consist of three or four times the number of seats which that State has in the House of Representatives divided in a way to reflect, as far as possible, nearly equal population. It further prescribes a lower limit of 24 members and an upper limit or cap of 40 members per State.

To accommodate the three special women-only seats, the bill proposes an increase of the upper limit from 40 to 43 seats. If the amendment passes, the total number of women only seats added to the 36 State Assemblies would be 108.

Implications of the Bill

The implications of the alterations sought in the aforementioned sections of the Constitution, and as contained in the Bill are as follows:

Section 48	-	37 additional Women Senators
Section 49	-	37 additional Women Representatives
Section 91	-	108 additional Women in the State Assemblies nationwide
Total	-	(National Assembly) 37 + 37 = 74
Total	-	(State Assemblies) = 108

Grand Total - (National Assembly + State Assemblies) 74 + 108 = 182 additional women legislators being sought in Nigeria.

d) Legislative History

This Bill was first sponsored in 2021 by Hon. Nkeiruka Onyejeocha and Hon. Femi Gbajabamila (Deputy Whip and Speaker respectively of the 9th House of Representatives) along with over 80 other co-sponsors with bill number HB1301. The Bill is now re-introduced in the 10th National Assembly by Hon. Benjamin Okezie Kalu (Deputy Speaker) and 12 others with bill number HB. 1349. Before 2021, there was no bill of a similar nature introduced to the National Assembly.

e) Creation of Special or Women-only Constituencies

The special seats would be new women-only constituencies that have no impact on existing ones. The whole state would constitute the woman-only district such that the woman would be elected to represent the state. By creating additional women-only districts or constituencies, this type of reserved seat in legislatures used as a temporary measure avoids existing constituencies being reserved for women. Reservation of existing seats while cost effective, is often opposed by male legislators.

f) Special seats not to stop women for contesting for regular seats.

It is noteworthy that the bill specifically mentions that the creation of special seats or women-only constituencies does not limit or prevent a woman from contesting for regular seats i.e., the existing 109 Senate and 360 House seats, as well as the existing seats in the State Assemblies already provided for by the Constitution. It is also important to note that the bill does not create a superior or inferior legislative status for the special seats as women occupying such seats would have equal privileges and responsibilities as other members.

g) Special Seats to be Contested and Filled by Direct Elections

The Bill amends **sections 77 (1) and 117 (1)** of the Constitution to subject the special seats to direct elections like every other legislative seat. In other words, the women must be voted for directly by constituents who are entitled to vote. This provision is important because in some

countries operating special seats or reserved parliamentary seats for groups like women, the seats are filled by indirect elections or appointment/nomination by political parties thus raising issues of electoral legitimacy and loyalty to constituents. In addition, the use of direct elections ensures that women campaign and compete for the seats so as to ensure voter involvement, accountability to constituents and building of electoral experience.

h) Seat Reservations for Women as a “Temporary Special Measure”

The bill is designed to be a Temporary Special Measure (TSM). The principle behind temporary measures is that they have a “temporary character” i.e., they are discontinued when their desired results have been achieved and sustained for a period. This is also to address concerns over affirmative action provisions becoming entrenched in the Constitution in a way that it becomes detrimental in the long run.

If this bill passes, it shall commence after the current life of the National and State Houses of Assembly i.e., in the next Assembly starting in 2027. Furthermore, the bill has a clause mandating the review of the reserved seats provision after four general election cycles of 16 years. This is to emphasise its temporary nature and provide an opportunity for its repeal or renewal, as the case may be.

i) Required Legislative Steps for Successful Constitution Alteration

The Reserved Seats Bill (HB 1349) is a House of Representatives Bill. Despite significant co-sponsorship and support by the leadership of the House, its provisions must be adopted by at least 2/3rd majority of members of the House (at least 240 of 360). Also, a 2/3rd majority of the Senate (at least 73 of 109) must concur or also adopt the provisions of the Bill. In line with the constitutional requirement on alterations, it must thereafter be approved by a Resolution of the Houses of Assembly of not less than two-thirds of all the States (at least 24 States). Finally, it would require Presidential Assent to become law.

j) The Problem the Bill Seeks to Address

The bill simply seeks to address the issue of underrepresentation in the legislature. With women occupying only 20 out of 469 seats in the National Assembly, the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) identifies Nigeria as one of the worst performing countries on the representation of women in parliament. The records at the State level are worse.

Table 1: Number of Women in the State Houses of Assembly

S/N	STATE	NUMBER OF SEATS	NUMBER OF WOMEN	PERCENTAGE
1	ABIA	24	-	0%
2	ADAMAWA	25	1	4%
3	AKWA IBOM	26	4	15%
4	ANAMBRA	30	1	3%
5	BAUCHI	31	-	0%
6	BAYELSA	24	2	8%
7	BENUE	30	2	7%
8	BORNO	28	-	0%
9	CROSS RIVER	25	1	4%
10	DELTA	28	2	7%
11	EBONYI	24	2	8%
12	EDO	24	2	8%
13	EKITI	26	6	23%
14	ENUGU	24	2	8%
15	GOMBE	24	-	0%
16	IMO	27	-	0%
17	JIGAWA	30	-	0%
18	KADUNA	34	1	3%
19	KANO	40	-	0%
20	KATSINA	34	-	0%
21	KEBBI	24	-	0%
22	KOGI	25	2	8%
23	KWARA	24	5	21%
24	LAGOS	40	4	10%
25	NASARAWA	24	1	4%
26	NIGER	27	1	4%
27	OGUN	26	2	8%
28	ONDO	26	3	4%
29	OSUN	26	-	0%
30	OYO	32	2	6%
31	PLATEAU	24	1	4%
32	RIVERS	32	6	19%
33	SOKOTO	30	-	0%
34	TARABA	24	2	8%
35	YOBE	24	-	0%
36	ZAMFARA	24	-	0%
	TOTAL	990	55	5.5%

Apart from the well-known political, socio-economic, cultural, and religious obstacles to women joining politics and contesting elections, one important factor influencing the likelihood of women being elected to a legislature is the type of electoral system used in the country. Electoral system simply refers to the way in which votes are translated into seats.

Nigeria operates a First-Past-the-Post (FPTP) /plurality electoral system for elections into the legislature. It is a simple majority system where a candidate in an election with the highest number of votes in a constituency is declared the winner – not minding the total number of votes obtained by other losing candidates which is usually larger when combined.

While FPTP system is seen to be very simple to operate, one of its [disadvantages is that it does not allow for fair representation](#) of diverse voters or voices in a constituency since a candidate can win an election without winning majority of the popular votes. In addition, FPTP system has been found to entrench larger parties and dominant groups so that smaller parties and disadvantaged groups who have been excluded from electoral politics over the years, such as women, have weak chances of disrupting the system and being elected.

In addition, it is known to be difficult to combine FPTP with quota systems, mostly because of the method of candidate recruitment which involves party primaries at the constituency and state levels, and which prioritises the emergence of male candidates over women. Party primaries determine candidacy and therefore are highly contested. Because the outcome is often controlled by political godfathers and strong party leaders in the States, it is not usually considered to be a predictable or fair process for candidate nominations. In summary, there is no level playing ground for women and efforts to reform this process have not yielded fruit.

On the other hand, in countries that operate a [Proportional Representation \(PR\) electoral system](#), which allows political parties to win seats in accordance with the percentage of votes they win at elections, it is easier to apply quotas as political parties can easily allocate seats to women to meet numeric targets such as 35%. In fact, majority of the countries being cited for their high numbers of female legislators such as Rwanda, South Africa and Senegal use PR electoral systems.

It is important to mention that expert studies and electoral reform panel reports such as the 2008 Uwais Electoral Reform Panel Report have suggested that Nigeria adopts some form of Proportional Representation electoral system for electing women and other disadvantaged groups, however this recommendation has never been taken forward.

Studies have frequently concluded that gender quotas or Temporary Special Measures for women can be ineffective unless they are context-appropriate and relevant to the electoral system meaning that any affirmative action measure taken to improve the election of women must consider the electoral system in place. For this reason, reserved seats or women-only constituency seats are typically adopted in countries that use the First-Past-the-Post system, and they have worked well.

3. COST OF GOVERNANCE CONCERNS

The potential cost of admitting additional members to the National Assembly is the biggest criticism of the Special Seats bill. Public commentary on the National Assembly budget and maintenance of the current size of the federal and state legislators have been very heated, which is worsened by the current economic crises in the country.

Generally, it is observed that the expenditure of government as seen through the annual Appropriation Acts of the Federal Government has been under heavy pressure. The annual budget has been on a deficit lane for a long time and has been constantly operated through borrowings. The national budget has also been on a ceaseless increase spiral. There has been increase between 1999 and 2024 from less than 500bn Naira in 1999, to over N28tr, showing an increase of over 5,000% in 26 years.

Table 2: Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN) Budget (1999 -2024)

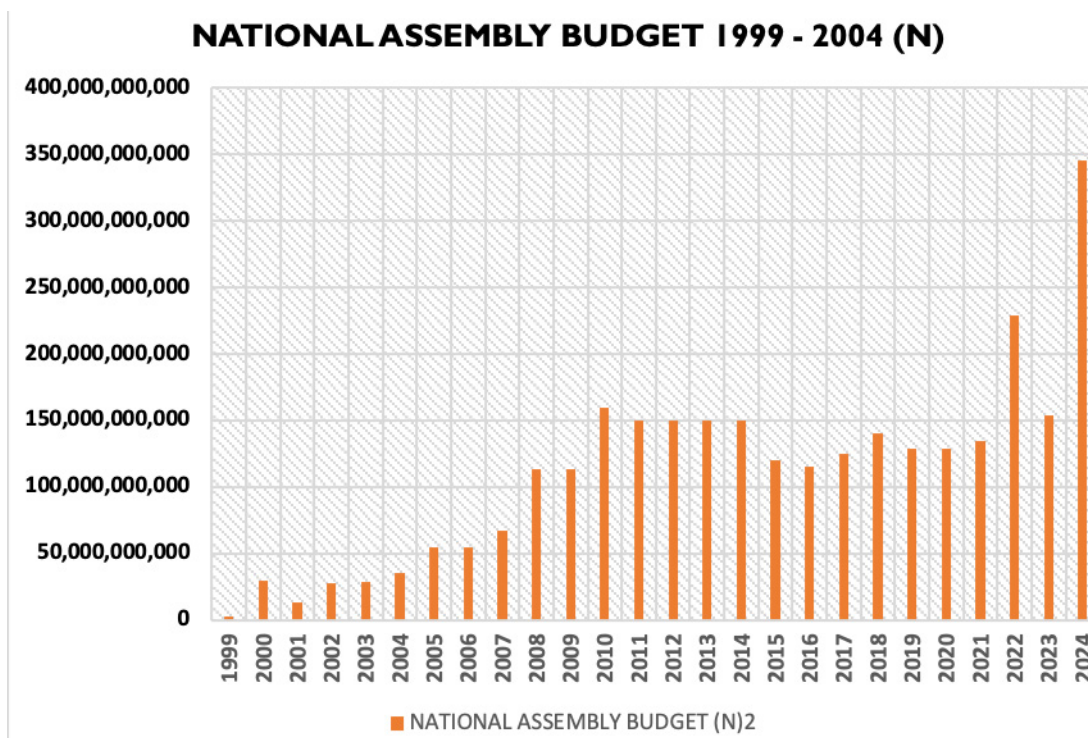
S/N	YEAR	TOTAL AGGREGATE PASSED (N)
1.	1999	484,518,094,772
2.	2000	675,080,490,731
3.	2001	818,878,456,157
4.	2002	1,013,507,643,521
5.	2003	916,068,269,403
6.	2004	888,862,494,202
7.	2005	1,799,938,243,138
8.	2006	1,899,987,922,467
9.	2007	2,309,223,949,983
10.	2008	2,647,492,865,643
11.	2009	2,055,959,582,738
12.	2010	5,001,107,013,979
13.	2011	4,484,736,648,992
14.	2012	4,877,209,156,933
15.	2013	4,987,220,425,601
16.	2014	4,695,190,000,000
17.	2015	4,637,783,957,157
18.	2016	6,060,677,358,227
19.	2017	7,441,175,486,758
20.	2018	9,120,334,988,225
21.	2019	8,906,964,099,373
22.	2020	10,810,800,872,071
23.	2021	13,588,027,886,175
24.	2022	17,319,704,091,091
25.	2023	21,827,188,747,391
26.	2024	28,777,404,073,861
	TOTAL	168,045,042,818,588

The National Assembly budget has also attracted interests and criticism from members of the public. The table below shows that the budget of the National Assembly in about 26 years increased from a level of N2.2bn to N344.8bn. This is an increase of about 15000% and an average of over 500% per annum, since 1999.

Table 3: National Assembly Budget 1999 – 2024

S/N	YEAR	NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BUDGET (N)	Rate of Change (%)
1.	1999	2,204,150,000	
2.	2000	29,400,197,761	1233.9%
3.	2001	13,229,483,837	-55.0%
4.	2002	27,826,930,230	110.3%
5.	2003	28,260,056,582	1.6%
6.	2004	34,729,324,335	22.9%
7.	2005	54,785,690,445	57.8%
8.	2006	54,785,690,445	0.0%
9.	2007	66,400,867,283	21.2%
10.	2008	112,922,787,521	70.1%
11.	2009	112,922,787,521	0.0%
12.	2010	158,916,167,627	40.7%
13.	2011	150,000,000,000	-5.6%
14.	2012	150,000,000,000	0.0%
15.	2013	150,000,000,000	0.0%
16.	2014	150,000,000,000	0.0%
17.	2015	120,000,000,000	-20.0%
18.	2016	115,000,000,000	-4.2%
19.	2017	125,000,000,000	8.7%
20.	2018	139,500,000,000	11.6%
21.	2019	128,000,000,000	-8.2%
22.	2020	128,000,000,000	4.00%
23.	2021	134,000,000,000	4.7%
24.	2022	228,106,146,208	48.98%
25.	2023	153,100,650,000	14.25%
26.	2024	344,852,880,669	51.16%
	TOTAL	2,911,743,810,435	

Figure 1: National Assembly Budget 1999 – 2004



In the light of this, it is understood that genuine effort must be made to ensure that any initiative coming with additional expenditure must be justified in terms of sustainable and long-term value addition to governance. The challenge therefore is to show how the aspiration for more women in governance will not inflict more pressure on the economy in general and particularly on the finances of the National Assembly.

4. COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS

This analysis gives insight into the cost of maintaining a lawmaker at both chambers of the National Assembly, including a State Law maker annually and for the entire tenure cycle of 4 years. The cost profile is juxtaposed against the assumed benefits and for the additional women lawmakers that will come on board if the bill passes through both chambers of the National Assembly and gets Presidential assent. The quantitative cost parameters are analysed based on publicly reported salaries and emoluments of legislators. Two scenarios are used for estimating the salaries and allowances of the federal lawmakers, as follows:

Scenario 1 – RMAFC Figures

The Revenue Mobilization, Allocation and Fiscal Commission (RMAFC) which is the legally authorised body to fix the salaries and allowances of the National Assembly members, has put in the public domain the approved salary and allowances of the Federal lawmakers. These costs represent the lower limit of estimated costs.

These figures are available on different online sites:

- <https://www.legit.ng/1253508-what-nigerias-senators-house-reps-members-receive-salaries-allowances.html>
- <https://rmaf.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Remuneration-Package-for-Political-and-Judicial-Office-Holders-.pdf>
- <https://rmaf.gov.ng/2024/08/clarification-on-remuneration-of-legislators-of-the-national-assembly/>
- <https://dailytrust.com/each-senator-earns-n1-063m-monthly-rmaf/>

Scenario 2 – Report by Lawmakers

Some members of the National Assembly have volunteered information on their salaries and emoluments. The face value of this report will form the basis of our analysis here. These costs represent the **upper limit** of estimated costs.

- i) Senator Shehu Sani, who represented Kaduna Central had shared that Senators were on an emolument package of:
- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Salary - | N750,000/month |
| Allowances - | <u>N13.5m</u> |
| TOTAL | N14.25m × 12 = N171m per annum |

(Source-See: <https://punchng.com/109-senators-earn-n1-4bn-annually-rmaf/>. See also: <http://www.legit.ng/1253508-what-nigerias-senators-house-reps-members-receive-salaries-allowances.html>)

Senator Orji Uzor Kalu in a recent Channels TV (October 2024) Interview also shared that he received N14 million monthly as a Senator.

<https://punchng.com/i-earn-n14m-monthly-as-a-senator-orji-kalu/>

- ii) Member of the House, Rep. Simon Karu who represented representing Kaltungo/Shongom Federal Constituency of Gombe State had shared that Members of the House were on an emolument package of:
- | | |
|--------------|--------------------------------|
| Salary - | N800,000/month |
| Allowances - | <u>N8.5m</u> |
| TOTAL | N9.3m × 12 = N111.6m per annum |

(Source: <http://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/417971-we-earn-n9-3m-monthly-rep-member.html>)

Using figures from the above sources to make calculations, modest insight is provided here on the estimated additional cost of including the envisaged additional women lawmakers, as sought in the bill.

Table 4: Summary of legislators' emoluments using RMAFC figures

Summary:		
<u>Scenario 1 RMAFC basis - per annum</u>		
Legislators' emoluments		
. Senator per annum	-	N17.00m
. MHR per annum	-	N13.70m
. MSHOA per annum	-	N05.80m
. TOTAL (All lawmakers) per annum	-	<u>N 36.5m</u>
. Add legislative aides (National)	-	N9.849bn
. Add legislative aides (States)	-	<u>N2.197bn</u>
Total per-annum	-	<u>N12.082bn</u>
<u>Scenario 1 - Per 4 years</u>		
. All lawmakers per 4 years	-	N50.168bn
. Motor Vehicle	-	N 3.752bn
. Legislative aides	-	<u>N48.184bn</u>
. Total cost	-	<u>N102.104bn</u>
MHR – Member House of Representatives		
MSHOA – Member State House of Assembly		
<i>Legislative aides' figures are based on field research. There are 5 legislative aides per Senator & 5 per Member. Motor vehicle costs are loans to NASS members to be repaid before expiration of tenure. The total 4-year cost for all lawmakers consists of annual cost per lawmaker multiplied by 4 and by the number of legislators in each legislative house (109, 360 and 990).</i>		

Table 5: Summary of legislators' emoluments using self-reported figures

<u>Scenario 2 – Self reported figures per annum</u>		
Legislators' emoluments		
. Senator per annum	-	N171.00m
. MHR per annum	-	N111.60m
. MSHOA per annum	-	<u>N05.80m</u>
. TOTAL (All lawmakers) per annum	-	N 288.41m
. Add legislative aides (National)	-	N9.849bn
. Add Leg. Aides (States)	-	<u>N2.197bn</u>
Total	-	<u>N12.334bn</u> per annum
<u>Scenario 2 – Per 4 years</u>		
. All lawmakers per 4 years	-	N258.267bn
. Motor Vehicle	-	N 75.000bn
. Legislative aides	-	N48.184bn
. Total cost	-	N381.45bn



MHR – Member House of Representatives

MSHOA – Member State House of Assembly

Legislative aides' figures are based on field research. There are 5 legislative aides per Senator & 5 per Member. Motor vehicle costs are loans to NASS members to be repaid before expiration of tenure. Total 4-year cost for all lawmakers consists of annual cost per lawmaker multiplied by 4 and by the number of legislators in each legislative house (109, 360 and 990).

Table 6: Projected Cost Implication of Additional Federal and State Legislators

Projected Cost Implications of Additional Federal and State Legislators

Annual emolument expenditure (Lower limit)

37 additional Senators × 17m =	N629.00m
37 additional M/House × N13.70m =	N506.90m
74 members' legislative aides	N1.554bn
108 additional State Houses × 5.81m =	N627.5m
108 × N185m (2 aides) × 12	<u>N239.76m</u>
TOTAL	<u>N2.004bn</u> per annum

N2.004bn × 4years =	N8.016bn
Add office acc.	4.000bn
Add Furnishing/Facilities	2.000bn
Add M/vehicle (74 lawmakers)	<u>N592m</u>
TOTAL	<u>N14.608bn/4years</u>

Annual emolument expenditure (Upper limit)

37 additional Senators × 171m =	N6.327 bn
37 additional M/House × N111.6m =	N4.129 bn
Leg. Aides for 74 lawmakers	N1.554 bn
108 additional State Houses × 5.81m =	N627.50m
Leg. Aides for 108 members (State)	<u>N239.76m</u>
TOTAL	<u>N12.877bn</u>

N12.877bn × 4 =	N51.50bn
Add office acc.	N 4.000bn
Add Furnishing/Facilities	N2.000bn
Add M/Vehicle (74 lawmakers)	<u>N11.840bn</u>
TOTAL	<u>N69.340bn /4years</u>

Notes:

1. All figures are estimates and not absolute costs.
2. 100% accuracy of estimates and figures may not be guaranteed but fits for the purpose of credible appreciation and understanding of the subject matter.
3. There are two levels used in determining Federal lawmakers' emoluments – Scenario 1 – RMAFC and Scenario 2 – Testimonies of lawmakers.
4. Emolument of aides are based on field research as estimates.
5. Cost of additional office based on projection for rent and furniture and facilities are based on extant and projected estimations, given current state of economy generally.
6. Motor Vehicles are loans (subject to repayment) and relevant, majorly for purposes of cash outflow/management for an interim period.
7. The cost of Motor vehicles (in Scenario 2/Upper limit) are estimated at N160m each. (<https://thenigerialawyer.com/senators-justify-n160m-suvs-compare-to-ministers-cars/>)
8. Cost of running State Houses of Assembly do not appear to have generated the same controversy as the National Assembly.

From the above, the estimated monetary cost of additional women members on the Federal Government Budget would amount to a **less than 1%** increase in the National Budget and **less than 5%** increase in the National Assembly Budget. In more specific terms:

Using the 2024 National Budget sum of **N 28,777,404,073,861**, the estimated cost of adding 74 women legislators to the National Assembly represents about **0.072%** (lower limit) to **0.226%** (upper limit) of the National Budget.

Using the 2024 National Assembly budget total sum of **N 344,852,880,669**, the estimated cost of adding 74 women legislators to the National Assembly represents about **0.78%** (lower limit) to **3.49%** (upper limit) of the National Assembly budget.

Unfortunately, while arguments are getting stronger in favor of greater women political participation and inclusion, the same cannot be said for the additional cost to be incurred to achieve this. But it must be stated that the future of the country cannot be merely resolved on this issue of monetary cost alone, given the value addition of women to national development. Excluding women from governance has significant economic costs that may be difficult to quantify in monetary terms, but it negatively impacts development outcomes in the society.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership roles has been linked to significant socio-economic deficits. An example is Nigeria, where women constitute nearly half the population yet occupy only about 4% of elected positions. When women are excluded from governance, issues affecting them, such as healthcare, education, and social welfare, often receive less attention. This perpetuates cycles of poverty, especially among women and their families. There is a documented correlation between increased female representation and enhanced socioeconomic development. Research indicates that when women participate in governance, there is a notable increase in gender-sensitive spending on critical sectors like health and education. In addition, without women's participation, families and communities may face increased dependency, as women's economic contributions are often crucial for household stability.

Excluding women also means that there is an underutilisation of talent and loss of diverse perspectives and skills. This limits innovation and problem-solving, which are crucial for economic competitiveness. Diverse governance leads to better collaboration across sectors and partnerships that can drive economic development. Thus, fostering an inclusive governance structure is not only a matter of equity but also a strategic economic imperative that can yield substantial dividends for societies at large.

There are several expert studies showing [women's impact on the economy](#) and that [Nigeria can gain up to 9% in GDP growth](#) by 2025 if there's an improvement in women's participation. By investing in girls and women and pushing more women into leadership positions, the costs of exclusion which are unquantifiable or not often tangible can be reduced. In summary, the economic costs of excluding women from governance are profound, impacting growth, equality, and overall societal well-being.

CONCLUSION

A key indicator for benchmarking democratic legislatures worldwide is its representativeness, particularly, the composition of women in parliament. It is considered best practice for representative bodies like the National and State Houses of Assembly to have substantial representation of affected populations, such as women, for them to influence policy outcomes. Unfortunately, the Nigerian legislature, as a high-level decision-making platform, is not representative of the women population in the country. Because it is a critical democratic institution with powers to allocate public resources and make laws with far-reaching effects on citizens, legal or constitutional measures to improve women's representation in the legislature deserve serious consideration. Like the popular saying goes, "*women belong in all places where decisions are being made*" and this includes the National and State Houses of Assembly.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN THE 10TH NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (2023 – 2027)

A. SENATE

S/N	NAME	SENATORIAL DISTRICT
1.	ADEBULE IDIAT OLURANTI	LAGOS WEST
2.	IRETI HEEBAH KINGIBE	FCT
3.	NATASHA AKPOTI UDUAGHAN	KOGI CENTRAL
4.	BANIGO IPALIBO HARRY	RIVERS WEST

B. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

S/N	NAME	CONSTITUENCY & STATE
1.	ZAINAB GIMBA	BAMA/NGALA/KALA-BALGE (BORNO)
2.	KHADIJA BUKAR ABBA IBRAHIM	DAMATURU/GUJBA/GULANI/TARMUWA (YOBE)
3.	FATIMA TALBA	NANGERE/POTISKUM (YOBE)
4.	KAFILAT OGBARA	KOSOFE (LAGOS)
5.	BLESSING CHIGERU AMADI	PORT HACOURT (RIVERS)
6.	BOMA GOODHEAD	AKUKU TORU / ASARI TORU (RIVERS)
7.	NNABUIFE CHINWE CLARA	ORUMBA NORTH/ORUMBA SOUTH (ANAMBRA)
8.	LILIAN OBIAGELI OROGBU	AWKA NORTH/AWKA SOUTH (ANAMBRA)
9.	ADEWUNMI ORİYOMI ONANUGA	IKENNE/ SHAGAMU/ REMO NORTH (OGUN)
10.	MARIE ENENIMIETE EBIKAKE	BRASS/NEMBE (BAYELSA)
11.	TOLULOPE TIWALOLA AKANDE-SADIPE	OLUYOLE (OYO)
12.	ONUH ONYECHE BLESSING	OTUKPO / OHIMINI (BENUE)
13.	MIRIAM ONUOHA	OKIGWE NORTH (IMO)
14.	GWACHAM MAUREEN CHIME	OYI/ AYAMELUM (ANAMBRA)
15.	ERHIATAKE IBORI-SUENU	ETHIOPE EAST/ ETHIOPE WEST (DELTA)
16.	REGINA AKUME	GBOKO/TARKA (BENUE)

APPENDIX 2: WOMEN LEGISLATORS IN THE STATE ASSEMBLIES (2023 – 2027)

S/N	STATE & NO. OF WOMEN	NAME & CONSTITUENCY
1	ABIA (0)	
2	ADAMAWA (1)	Hon. Kate Raymond (Mamuno- Demsa)
3	AKWA IBOM (4)	1. Hon. Etim Itorobong Francis (Uruan) 2. Hon. Selong Precious Akamba (Urue Offong/Oruko) 3. Hon. Onofiok Kenim Victor (Oron/Udung Uko) 4. Hon Ukpatuk Selina Isotuk (Ikot Abasi/Eastern Obolo)
4	ANAMBRA (1)	Hon. Nkechi Ogbuefi Anyanwu (Anaocha I)
5	BAUCHI (0)	
6	BAYELSA (2)	1. Hon. Egba Ayibanegiyefa (Yenagoa) 2. Hon. Cockeye Brown Ebizi Ndiomu (Sagbama Constituency III)
7	BENUE (2)	1. Hon. Lami Danladi Ogenyi, Deputy Speaker (Ado) 2. Hon. Becky Orpin (Gboko East)
8	BORNO (0)	
9	CROSS RIVER (1)	Hon. (Dr.) Mercy Akpama (Yakurr II)
10	DELTA (2)	1. Hon. Marilyn Okowa (Ika North-East) 2. Hon. Bridget Anyafulu (Oshimili South)
11	EBONYI (2)	1. Hon. Esther Agwu (Ohaukwo North) 2. Hon. Chinyere Juliet Nwogbaga (Ebonyi North-East)
12	EDO (2)	1. Hon. Maria Omozele Oligbi-Edeko Esq, Deputy Speaker (Esan North-East II) 2. Hon. Natasha Irobosa Osawaru (Egor)
13	EKITI (6)	1. Hon. Bolaji Egbeyemi Olagbaju, Deputy Speaker (Ado II) 2. Hon. Olowokere Bose Yinka (Efon) 3. Hon. Fakunle Okieime Iyabode (Ilejemeje) 4. Hon. Abimbola Christiana Solanke (Moba I) 5. Hon. Ogunlade Mariam Abimbola (Emure) 6. Hon. Okuyiga Eyitayo Adeteju (Ayekire/Gboyin)
14	ENUGU (2)	1. Hon. Obiajulu Princess Ugwu (Enugu South Rural) 2. Hon. Mrs Jane Eneh (Awgu North)
15	GOMBE (0)	
16	IMO (0)	
17	JIGAWA (0)	
18	KADUNA (1)	Hon. Munira Suleiman Tanimu, Deputy Majority Leader (Lere East)
19	KANO (0)	
20	KATSINA (0)	

S/N	STATE & NO. OF WOMEN	NAME & CONSTITUENCY
21	KEBBI (0)	
22	KOGI (2)	1. Hon. Comfort Ojoma Nwuchola, Deputy Speaker (Ibaji) 2. Hon Omotayo Adeleye-Ishaya (Ijumu)
23	KWARA (5)	1. Hon. Rukayat Shittu (Owode/Onire) 2. Hon. Arinola Fatimoh Lawal (Ilorin East) 3. Hon. Medinat AbdulRaheem (Lanwa/Ejidondari) 4. Hon. Aishat Babatunde-Alanamu (Ilorin North/West) 5. Hon. Maryam Aladi (Ilorin South)
24	LAGOS (4)	1. Hon. Mojisola Lasbat Meranda, Deputy Speaker (Apapa Constituency I) 2. Hon. Sangodara Rotimi (Surulere II) 3. Hon. Osafire Foluke Stella (Amuwo Odofin I) 4. Hon. Princess Omolara Oyekan-Olumegbon (Lagos Island I)
25	NASARAWA (1)	Hon. Hajara Ibrahim Danyaro (Nasarawa Central)
26	NIGER (1)	Hon. Afiniki Eunice Dauda (Gurara)
27	OGUN (2)	1. Hon. Bakare Omolola Olanrewaju (Ijebu Ode) 2. Hon. Bolanle Ajayi Lateefat, Deputy Speaker (Yewa South)
28	ONDO (3)	1. Hon. Witherspoon Atinuke Morenike (Owo) 2. Hon. Fayemi-Obayelu Olawumi (Ilaje II) 3. Hon. Ogunlowo Oluwatosin Ajirototu (Idanre)
29	OSUN (0)	
30	OYO (2)	1. Hon. Bisi Oluranti Oyewo Micheal (Ogbomoso North) 2. Hon Olajide Olufunke Comforter (Ibadan North I)
31	PLATEAU (1)	Hon. Salomi Tanimu Wanglek (Pankshin South)
32	RIVERS (6)	1. Hon. Linda Somiari-Stewart (Okrika) 2. Hon. Queen Williams (Ahoada East I) 3. Hon. Justina Emeji (Emohua) 4. Hon. Barile Nwakoh (Khana I) 5. Hon. Nkemuika Nkemjika Ezekwe (Ogba/Egbema/ Ndoni II) 6. Hon. Emilia Lucky Amadi (Obio/Akpor II)
33	SOKOTO (0)	
34	TARABA (2)	1. Hon. Veronica Alhassan (Bali) 2. Hon. Hajiya Batulu Muhammed (Gashaka)
35	YOBE (0)	
36	ZAMFARA (0)	



About PLAC

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC) is a non-governmental organization committed to strengthening democratic governance and citizens' participation in Nigeria. PLAC works to enhance citizens' engagement with state institutions, and to promote transparency and accountability in policy and decision-making process.

The main focus of PLAC's intervention in the democratic governance process is on building the capacity of the legislature and reforming the electoral process. Since its establishment, PLAC has grown into a leading institution with capacity to deliver cutting-edge research, policy analysis and advocacy. PLAC receives funding support from donors and other philanthropic sources.

Policy and Legal Advocacy Centre (PLAC)
Plot 45 I Gambo Jimeta Crescent,
Guzape District,
Abuja, Nigeria.

Website: www.placng.org *Email: info@placng.org *Phone: 08091899999



European Union Support to Democratic
Governance in Nigeria (EU-SDGN) Programme
www.eusdgn.org

IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

