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MEDIA RELEASE

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NAMFREL Statement on the Proposed Postponement of the 2025 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE)

The National Citizens' Movement for Free Elections (NAMFREL) opposes the postponement of the conduct of the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections (BSKE) scheduled for December 1, 2025. While Article X, Section 8 of the 1987 Philippine Constitution provides Congress the authority to determine the term of office for Barangay and SK officials through legislation, NAMFREL emphasizes that it must act in a manner consistent with democratic principles and the rule of law, ensuring genuine periodic elections, and that the proposed law extending the term of BSK officials should be applied in consideration of the 2025 BSKE.

The barangay, as the smallest government unit, leads local programs and serves as a space for resolving community issues. As the closest government to the people, voters must regularly and periodically choose their leaders. Equally important is the role of the Sangguniang Kabataan (SK), which empowers youth to lead, voice concerns, and join in barangay decision-making. Postponing SK elections deprives young people of representation and delays youth participation in governance.

Previous postponements of the BSKE have disrupted the regular electoral cycle. The Supreme Court, concerning the 2022 BSKE postponement, ruled that meaningful voting requires genuine periodic elections *"which ensure that the authority of government continues to be based on the free expression of the will of electors."* *"The right of suffrage requires the holding of honest, genuine, regular, and periodic elections."* (G.R. No. 263590, Macalintal v. COMELEC; G.R. No. 263673, Hidalgo, et al. v. Executive Secretary, et al.) The hold-over provision of the Senate Bill No. 2816, while practical as it allows the continuity of services in the barangay without disruption until the next scheduled election, can violate the public's right to a genuine periodic election as it extends the term of incumbents beyond their original mandate without direct public consent.

NAMFREL strongly believes that democracy works best when elections are held regularly, on time, and fairly. Delaying the 2025 BSKE can weaken people's trust in the electoral process and take away the chance for communities and the youth to be heard. We urge Congress to protect the right to vote and let the December 1, 2025 elections push through. NAMFREL remains committed to taking part in building good and accountable governance. ###