



## Ateneo FactCheck 2013 Fifth Brief

### Fact Check: Senatoriables and the Political Party Development Bill

*Claim: Candidates who are not members of political dynasties are supportive of the party development bill.*

Fact checked:

Political parties are political organizations that seek to aggregate various interests and gain influence in government through nominating candidates and gaining elective government positions, especially in the legislative branch, in order to enact and execute policies. In the Philippines the term political parties is commonly associated—albeit in a limited fashion—to elections. While political parties are allowed in the country, there has been no single Political Party Development Law that has been passed. The closest would be the Party-list Act of 1998 which sought to promote the multiparty system in the country.

The uphill battle of a Political Party Development bill in Congress is the prevalence of the culture of political dynasties in the country. Even though varied advocacies aiming at developing political parties have been made, emphasizing the necessity of reform, this has not overcome the patronage that dynasties create and deepen.

The most problematic in this set-up is the very subjugation of political parties to patron dynasties. There are currently 13 candidates out of the top 20 candidates who come from known political dynasties. Of the 13, seven candidates are supportive of a political party reform or development bill, namely: Alan Peter Cayetano, Chiz Escudero, Jun Magsaysay, Dick Gordon, Bam Aquino, Sonny Angara and Jack Enrile.

Out of these seven candidates, only Sonny Angara has the clear legislative track record in pushing for a party development bill. Sonny Angara is the author of the House version of the Party Development bill. Hence, he can be strongly relied on to advocate a political party reform policy in the Senate.

The six other candidates who come from political dynasties have no clear stand on the issue, or information on their position could not be found. They are JV Ejercito, Nancy Binay, Cynthia Villar, Juan Miguel Zubiri, Ernesto Maceda and Tingting Cojuangco.

On the other hand, seven non-dynasty candidates in the top 20 are all supportive of the party development bill. They are Loren Legarda, Jamby Madrigal, Risa Hontiveros, Koko Pimentel, Antonio Trillanes, Gringo Honasan, and Grace Poe. Among these seven, only Loren Legarda and Risa Hontiveros have the legislative track record in supporting a Party Reform or Development. Legarda filed her versions of a Political Party Development Bill during the 14 Congress, while Hontiveros, through her political party Akbayan, filed a political party-list reform measure in the House of Representatives.



Majority of the candidates who are in favor of passing a bill for Political Party Development think that more than strengthening political parties it will address primarily address the problem of “turncoatism” or also known as party switching. Some politicians may feel that there is no incentive in remaining in one and the same political party. Hence, they easily switch political parties during elections, in order to improve their chances of winning. Among the 20 candidates, seven out of the 13 candidates from dynasties are switchers. Only two out of the seven non-dynasty candidates are switchers, with five with no record of switching parties ever.

In sum, Sonny Angara, Loren Legarda and Risa Hontiveros would be the strongest advocates for Political Party Reform bills. A large majority (11 out of the top 20 candidates) may support the measure, but will likely not actively push for it. It is expected that these 11 will have reservations to any version of the bill passed, and will take the opportunity to further modify or amend the bill that could imperil its passage. It is worth noting that any form of the bill will not meet strong opposition, even among the six fence-sitters on the issue.