**REVIEW OF GAUTENG PETITIONS ACT UNDERWAY: PROMOTING DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY**

As the Sixth Term of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature’s (GPL) office draws to a close, Chairperson of the Petitions Standing Committee, Advocate Ezra Letsoalo, officially announced at today’s final Sitting a review of the Gauteng Petitions Act (no. 5 of 2002).

Back in 1998, the GPL endorsed the Republic of South Africa’s very first petitions legislation, namely: the Gauteng Petitions Act (no. 14 of 1998). This legislation breathed life into Section 17 of the Constitution by creating a piece of legislation that articulated how the petitioning system would work thereby, infusing accountability. Four years after the Act was passed, the environmental context which the Act intended to manage had evolved drastically; warranting amendment for the Act to mirror the society it now served. Thus, the Act was amended in 2002.

Over two decades later (in 2024), a third review of this legislation is necessary and is now underway, i.e., the Gauteng Petitions Amendment Bill of 2024.

Tabling the motive of the Act’s review, Advocate Letsoalo, said, “Legislation needs to be reviewed so that assessments and evaluations are done to see whether the piece of legislation still addresses the problem it was created to fix. Moreover, a reviewal is also necessary for re-examining whether the character of the problem has changed.”

The current review of the Act was warranted by the inordinate amount of local government petitions whilst local government have Section 79 Petition Committees, lack of responsiveness by authorities, and the incessant incongruity on the side of the Executive in delegating junior officials to appear before the Committee to answer to petitions management inefficiencies.

**Consultation**

Section 118 imposes a duty on the Legislature to facilitate public involvement in its legislative processes. Therefore, the first targeted stakeholder engagement for the Amendment Bill was held yesterday, (9 May). The engagement was fruitful, progressive, and will go a long way in enriching the final Amendment Bill.

**Purpose of the Bill**

The Gauteng Petitions Amendment Bill 2024 seeks to amend the Gauteng Petitions Act, 2002, to provide for the right to submit a petition to the Legislature of the Province of Gauteng, and to encourage the people of Gauteng to exhaust all remedial measures before escalating to the Legislature.

Key amendments to the Act include the rearticulation of the Act’s intentions, spelling out all recourse platforms for petitioners, defining the process for greater accountability and specificity, strengthening Executive reporting, mandating senior personnel in the Execuitve to account to the Committee, and exhorting municipalities to amend their petitions by-laws to conform to the Act.

Advocate Letsoalo continued, “The act of petitioning has never been a polite ineffectual method of politics. These amendments only enhance the objectives of the Petitions Act and call for all those in the accountability ecosystem to carry their weight and serve the people of Gauteng.”

More public participation hearings are scheduled to continue in the new term of the Gauteng Provincial Legislature after the general elections, wherein the Amendment Bill will be finalized.

Meanwhile, Gauteng residents are reminded to petition the GPL online via the [GPL’s e-Petitions system](https://www.gpl.gov.za/petitions/%2C). The system allows residents to submit service delivery related petitions online and track their progress on their cell phone anytime, anywhere.



**ISSUED BY GPL’S MEDIA SERVICES ON BEHALF OF CHAIRPERSON OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS, HONOURABLE Adv. EZRA LETSOALO**