



**Union Buildings**  
Private Bag X1000,  
Pretoria,  
0001

21 May 2019

Dear President Cyril Ramaphosa

On 4 December 2018, Your Excellency's office responded to My Vote Counts' (MVC) second call for the then Political Party Funding Bill (Funding Bill) to be signed. The response also served to remind MVC of a November 2018 press statement by the Presidency, where the Funding Bill is listed as one of eight bills the President would sign and further apply his mind "with urgency and thoroughness to enable the soonest feasible commencement [...]." The press statement identified the need for "[...] private funding [regulation] of political parties as part of a vibrant democracy [...]." After Your Excellency signed the Political Party Funding Act (Funding Act) in January of this year, this promise of a "vibrant democracy" through private political party funding transparency legislation continues to be unnecessarily and unfairly delayed.

The most recent statements made by high-ranking political party officials on the Funding Act, explicitly confirms how political parties are intentionally clasp onto the opportunity to stall its implementation. On 10 May, the *Mail & Guardian* referred to statements in their [report](#) made by the African National Congress's (ANC) Treasurer General, Paul Mashatile, and the Democratic Alliance's (DA) CEO, Paul Boughey. These high-ranking officials expressed intent to request the Act be reviewed in Parliament.

The main justification brought forward by these officials for the review is due to the supposed negative impact the Act has had on all political parties to raise private funds for their election campaigns. However, MVC condemns such misleading statements which directs blame on the Funding Act for hindering parties' abilities to raise private funding. These deceptive statements were made in the absence of disclosing any records to prove any substantial drop in private funding. Further, the sum of all 48 political parties' election campaigns in the lead up to this year's election is estimated to have cost around [R2 billion](#). An estimated R1 billion was reportedly spent by the ANC, R600 million by the DA and other political parties collectively spent an estimated R400 million.

It is also important to consider the arguments these officials reportedly made regarding how the Act undermined the ability of smaller parties in particular to raise funds. Firstly, the Act has not led to the demise of small parties. The results of this year's election saw the growth and/or emergence of smaller parties, some of which campaigned over a miniscule



time period in comparison to larger parties such as the ANC and the DA. Secondly, the Act contains a new public funding allocation formula, which would serve in favour of smaller parties who struggle to raise funds. The current formula in the Public Funding of Represented Political Parties Act has been identified as an unfair hindrance to smaller parties' ability to expand their political campaigns. The reform in public funding distribution to political parties in Parliament has been touted by smaller parties as a necessary step to enhancing more equality in the political playing field.

During the recently held sixth general elections, South Africans were able to exercise their democratic right to vote which was denied to the black population during the apartheid era. However, South Africa's democracy and the right to vote remains tragically undermined in the absence of the Funding Act being promulgated. Once again, MVC would like to remind Your Excellency of the Constitutional Court judgement, delivered on 21 June 2018, on the matter between *MVC and the Minister of Justice and Correctional Services*. This judgement confirms the political right to make an informed vote through access to political parties' private funding information. The delay of the Act's implementation further delays an order by the highest court in South Africa.

The promulgation of this Act lies in the hands of the President and MVC is urging Your Excellency to allow the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to continue their work in the final stages in the lead up to the Act's implementation.

MVC believes that South Africa has the capacity and resources to make the Funding Act a reality, particularly in light of the hundreds of millions reportedly being spent on the upgrade of ministerial homes and for Your Excellency's inauguration. For over a decade, civil society has championed the call for transparency of political parties' private funding and MVC firmly believes that the "New Dawn" cannot bear sustainable renewal without the implementation of the Funding Act. When operational, the Act will play a pivotal role in delivering accountability and transparency through systematic and continuous disclosure of parties private funding.

Yours Sincerely,

**Ms Zahira Grimwood** (MVC Political Systems Researcher & Project Manager)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Zd', written in a cursive style.