

# საქართველოს ახალგაზრდა იურისტთა ასოციაცია GEORGIAN YOUNG LAWYERS' ASSOCIATION



## Response of Non-Governmental and Media Organizations to Davit Bakradze

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Today, on March 7, 2012, non-governmental and media organizations participating in the campaign It Affects You held a press-conference at the office of the Open Society – Georgia Foundation, where they responded to the statement of Chairman of Parliament Davit Bakradze.

Representatives of the ruling party have recently declared about their intension to once more review the election legislation and define existing regulations in a more accurate manner. Specifically, it will clearly stipulate that the legislation does not restrict “legitimate activities” of non-governmental and donor organizations specializing in political party development.

Campaign participants welcome Parliament’s decision to revise ambiguous and problematic legislation but they also communicate their position about the issue once again.

The legislative proposal submitted by NGOs to Parliament not only serves the purpose of avoiding restriction of work of non-governmental and international organizations but it also aims at improving election environment, creating level playing field for political parties and protecting Constitutional rights and freedoms of citizens and organizations.

These are the following key requirements contained by the legislative proposal that non-governmental organizations have prepared:

- Abolish voter’s criminal liability. Instead, all of the responsibility for vote buying should fall on a party or a legal entity;
- The circle of individuals that may be subjected to restrictions established for political parties should be narrowed down. The restrictions should apply solely to individuals with declared political goals, who will pay for realization of these goals;
- Determine the scope of the work of the Chamber of Control, in order to prevent it from easily manipulating;
- The procedure for sequestering one’s property – the authority that the Chamber of Commerce has been delegated with - should be stipulated in details. Sequestration of property without involvement of the Chamber of Commerce should be prohibited.
- Unreasonable sanctions against parties and other entities should be reduced.

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Organizers of the press-conference once more highlighted that in order to ensure fair and equal elections, it is important to amend a number of regulations, including regulations in the Election Code. It is also necessary to invite a long-term monitoring mission to Georgia in order to enable political parties to plan and carry out their campaigns in a level playing field.

The legislative proposal was submitted to Parliament on February 17, 2012 by the following four non-governmental organizations: Georgian Young Lawyers' Association, Transparency International – Georgia, International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy, and the Coalition for Free Choice.