



# Nigeria's Electoral Act Amendment: What the New Bill Means for Future Elections

## Introduction

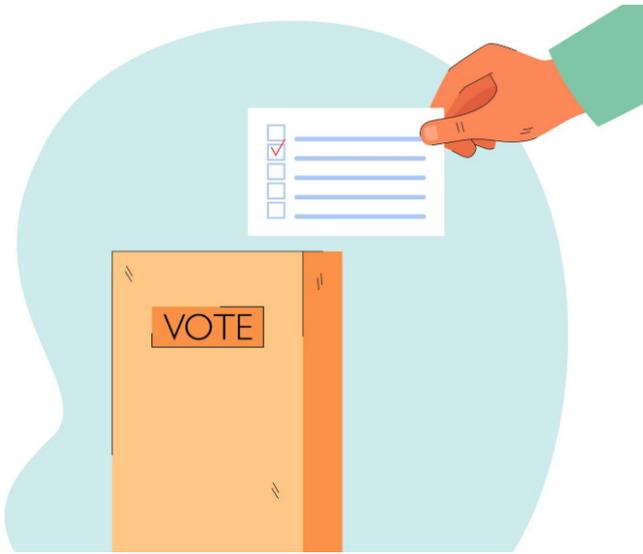
In early February 2026, Nigeria's National Assembly passed the Electoral Act 2022 (Repeal and Re-enactment) Amendment Bill 2026 into law on 17th February 2026 following detailed section-by-section consideration. While the Act retains key features of the existing framework, it introduces targeted adjustments aimed at addressing operational challenges, reducing litigation uncertainty, and improving administrative efficiency ahead of future election cycles.

## What the Act Proposes: Key Changes Explained

### 1) Voter Identification and Accreditation

- The Act now formally recognize the Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) as the technology used for voter accreditation, replacing references to "smart card readers."
- The Permanent Voter Card (PVC) remains the only mandatory identification document at polling units.

**In practical terms:** The accreditation process stays largely the same, with BVAS confirmed in law and PVCs remaining compulsory.



## 5) Ballot Paper Inspection

The existing process remains unchanged:

- Political parties have two days to approve or reject sample ballot papers.
- The electoral commission must invite parties to inspect ballot samples at least 20 days before an election.

## Legal and Regulatory Implications

- **For the electorate and public accountability:** While the Act reflects administrative realities, it does not introduce mandatory real-time electronic transmission of results. Public verification therefore continues to rely largely on institutional safeguards and post-election dispute mechanisms.
- **For political parties and candidates:** Shorter timelines increase compliance pressure. Parties will need to conclude primaries earlier, manage internal disputes quickly, and maintain tighter documentation to avoid disqualification or procedural setbacks.
- **For election litigation:** By retaining oral testimony as admissible evidence, the Act maintains the current approach in election petitions. Parties may continue to rely on both documents and witness testimony when challenging election outcomes.

## Stay Informed with SimmonsCooper Partners

The Electoral Act Amendment 2026 will shape how elections are conducted, contested, and administered in the coming cycles. Understanding these changes early helps political actors, institutions, and observers prepare appropriately.

For insights on electoral law developments, legislative reform, and public policy implications, contact [info@scp-law.com](mailto:info@scp-law.com) or visit [www.scp-law.com](http://www.scp-law.com).

## 2) Shorter Electoral Timelines

- The notice of election issued by the electoral commission is reduced from 360 days to 180 days before the election.
- Political parties must now submit candidate lists 90 days before the general election, instead of 180 days.

**What this means:** The election calendar is more compressed. Political parties and candidates will have less time to organise primaries, documentation, and compliance processes.

## 3) Penalties for PVC-Related Offences

The increment of prison term for buying or selling PVCs to 10 years was rejected.

- The two-year imprisonment term remains.
- The fine increases from ~~₺2~~ million to ~~₺5~~ million.

**The signal:** The Senate retained proportional penalties but raised the financial consequence.

## 4) Evidence in Election Petitions

A proposed provision that would have restricted proof of non-compliance in election petitions to documentary evidence alone was removed.

**Why this matters:** Courts may continue to consider both documentary and oral evidence in election disputes. This preserves judicial flexibility and avoids rigid evidentiary limits that could have shaped the outcome of petitions.