

A
BILL

to provide for the establishment of the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission

WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for the establishment of the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission in order to facilitate a mechanism for whistleblower information relating to corruption and to protect whistleblowers from disadvantageous measures, and to give them rewards for such whistleblower information and for matters connected therewith and ancillary thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:

1. Short title, extent and commencement.— (1) This Act may be called the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission Act, 2019.

(2) It shall extend to the whole of Pakistan.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.—In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the meanings hereby respectively assigned to them:

(a) “Authority” includes National Accountability Bureau, Federal Investigation Agency, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, Federal and Provincial anti-corruption departments, Financial Monitoring Unit and other Federal or Provincial agencies and authorities empowered to prosecute a person in respect of corruption and corrupt practices.;

(b) “Chairman” means the Chairman of the Commission;

(c) “Commission” means the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission established under section 3 of this Act;

(d) “Disadvantageous Measures” includes the following actions:

(i) removal from office, release from office, dismissal or any other unfavourable penal or personal action equivalent to the loss of status at work;

- (ii) disciplinary action, suspension from office, reduction in pay, demotion, restriction on promotion and any other unfair personal action;
 - (iii) work reassignment, transfer, denial of duties, rearrangement of duties or any other personal actions that are against the Whistleblower's will;
 - (iv) discrimination in the performance evaluation, etc. and subsequent discrimination in the payment of wages, bonuses, etc.;
 - (v) cancellation of education, training or other self-development opportunities;
 - (vi) the restriction or removal of budget, work force or other available resources;
 - (vii) the suspension of access to security information or classified information or the cancelation of authorization to handle security information or classified information or any other discrimination or measure detrimental to the working conditions of the Whistleblower;
 - (viii) putting the Whistleblower's name on a black or grey lists as well as the release of such a black or grey lists, bullying, the use of violence and abusive language, or any other action that causes physical harm;
 - (ix) unfair audit or inspection of the Whistleblower's work;
 - (x) cancellation of a license or permit, or any other action that causes disadvantage to the Whistleblower;
 - (xi) termination of contract for goods or services, or any other measure that causes financial loss to the Whistleblower;
 - (xii) intimidation;
 - (xiii) threat of any of the above; and
 - (xiv) any other unlawful adverse action;
- (e) "Government" means the Federal Government;

- (f) “prescribed” means prescribed by rules or regulations;
- (g) “Whistleblower Information” includes a complaint against a holder of public office to the Commission relating to the commission of offences:-
 - (i) of corruption and corrupt practices under the National Accountability Bureau Ordinance, 1999;
 - (ii) of a scheduled offence under Federal Investigation Agency Act, 1974;
 - (iii) under the Anti-Money Laundering Act, 2010;
 - (iv) under the Securities Act, 2015 in relation to public listed companies;
 - (v) cognizable under the Federal and Provincial anti-corruption laws;
- (h) “regulations” mean regulations made under this Act;
- (i) “rules” mean rules made under this Act;
- (j) “Whistleblower” means a person or entity or an agency, who files a Whistleblower Information under this Act.

3. Establishment of Whistleblowers Protection and Vigilance Commission.— (1) As soon as, after the commencement of this Act:

- (a) the Government shall establish a Commission, to be known as the Whistleblower Protection and Vigilance Commission; or
- (b) the Government may, by notification, appoint any body corporate or office or any department of such body corporate or any Government department or functionary or any organization to act as the Commission as may be specified in the notification.

(2) In the event of exercise of power under clause (b) of sub-section (1) of this section, the notified body corporate, office, department, functionary or organization shall be deemed to be the Commission under this Act.

(3) The Commission may establish offices at such other places in Pakistan as it considers necessary.

(4) The Commission shall be administratively and functionally independent, and the Federal Government shall use its best efforts to promote, enhance and maintain the independence of the Commission.