



Presentation to the Portfolio Committee on Home Affairs and
the Select Committee on Security and Justice

The role of independent candidates in South African democracy

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2. Brief introduction to My Vote Counts
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2. Brief introduction to My Vote Counts

- Founded to improve the accountability, transparency and inclusiveness of elections and politics in South Africa.
- We work to ensure that the political and electoral systems are open, fair and accountable to the public and that they remain relevant in the changing South African socio-political context.
- We produce popular education material for a clearer understanding of South Africa's political and electoral systems and work with community-based organisations to raise awareness of these issues.
- We conduct research that helps to inform MVC's advocacy and popular education activities, to provide an understanding of political and electoral issues and to provide policy alternatives for South Africa's political and electoral systems based on the changing economic and socio-political context.
- We initiate litigation, as a last resort, in order to ensure that the constitutional principles of transparency, inclusiveness and accountability remain the basis of our political and electoral systems.
- More specifically, our work has focused on political party funding transparency, access to information, and electoral integrity and reform.



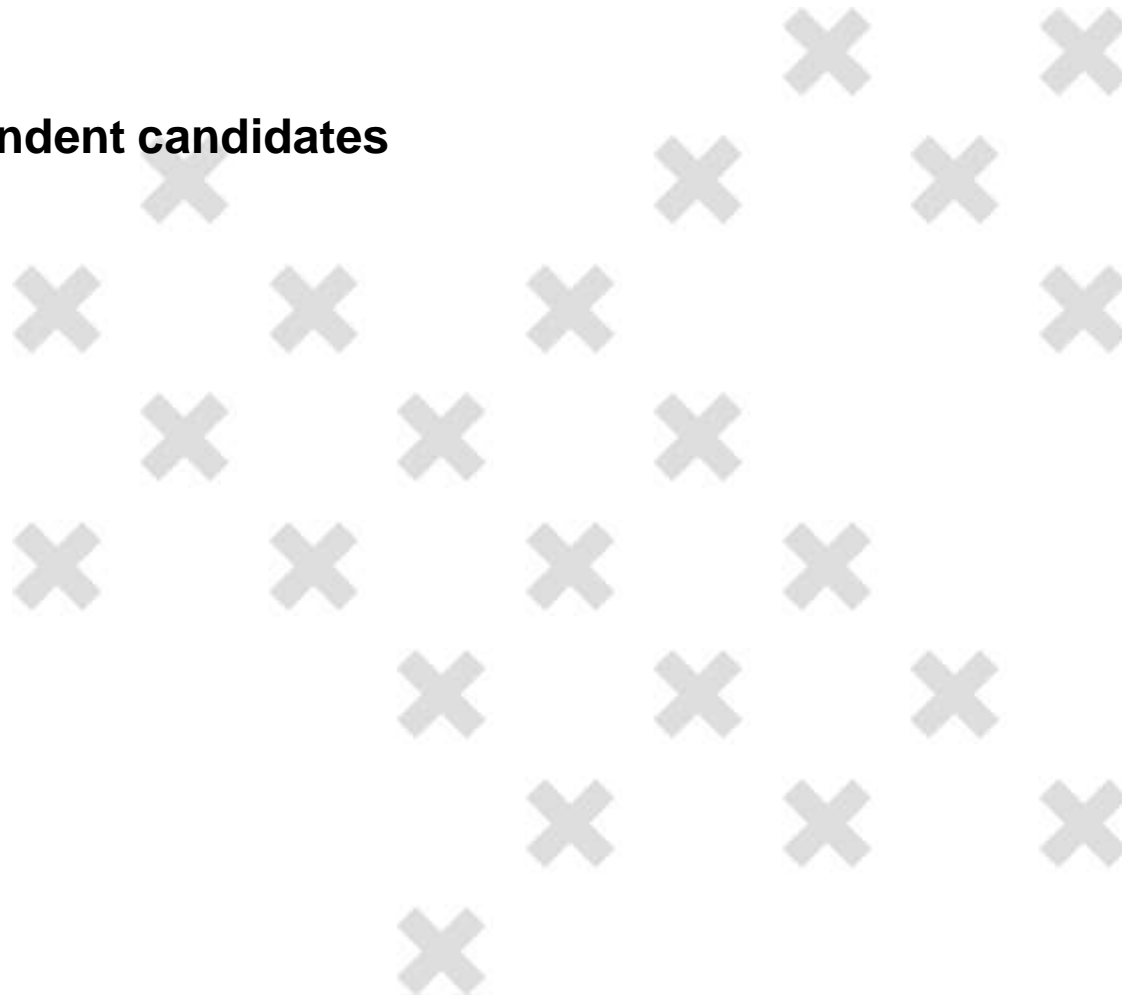
3. Response to the Constitutional Court judgment

- MVC is deeply excited about the prospect of independent candidates at provincial and national level.
- Almost 20 years ago the Van Zyl Slabbert report highlighted issues of accountability in our electoral system.
- The change to our system provides the potential for this issues to be addressed.
- Accountability is one of the most used buzz words in our political landscape – what does it truly mean?
- The judgment deepens political choices – both for those who want to stand to be elected as well as for the electorate.



4. Impact of independent candidates

- Reverse voter apathy/decline in turnout at elections
- Direct link with voters
- Resource to constituents
- Not beholden to a party
- More competitive political space
- Political parties potential response
- Incentive to perform and serve constituents





5. Limitations

- Cannot solve all issues of accountability
- Independents already run at local government and there are problems in this sphere
- Independents in local government
- Independents do not have the infrastructure, support, finances of a political party
- Independents in other national legislatures
- Potential for co-option



- NB development but not a panacea
- Concerns raised by the IEC
- Voter education
- Narrow versus broad electoral reform
- What MVC is doing

6. Concluding remarks

END

Thank you