

POLÍTIKA

CRITICAL ISSUES OF PHILIPPINE POLITY

1ST QUARTER

Navigating Political Polarization and Populism: Analyzing the February 2025 Pre-Midterm Electoral Landscape in the Philippines

A snapshot of the social and political economic conditions six weeks before the midterm elections, a dissection of the populist onslaught, and an analysis of factors affecting voter preferences and behavior

Philippine Foreign and Security Policy

The First Quarter of 2025 featured an upward trend for the Philippines' security engagements, consistent with the foreign policy direction of the Marcos Jr. administration as the West Philippine Sea as one of the cornerstones

Legislative Updates and Developments

On January 8, 2025, the President signed the Philippine Natural Gas Industry Development Act and Congress acted on several key priorities, including the amendment to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act. Other significant legislative measures remain pending at the committee level

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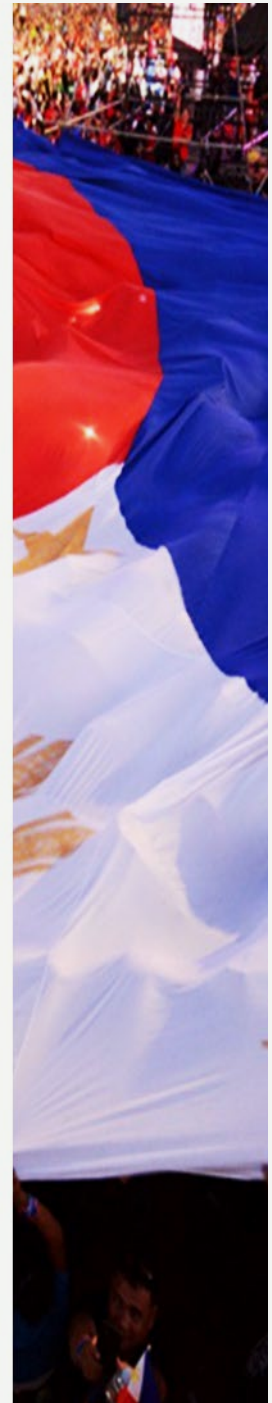
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OVERVIEW

The 2025 Philippine midterm elections are set against a backdrop of significant political polarization and the rise of populism. This First Quarter issue of POLITIKA, titled “Navigating Political Polarization and Populism: Insights and Strategies for the 2025 Philippine Midterm Elections,” provides an analysis of the current electoral environment, focusing on key factors that influence voter behavior and preferences.

A survey by Pulse Asia Research, conducted in February 2025, highlights the most urgent national concerns that voters prioritize such as controlling inflation, increasing workers’ pay, fighting corruption, reducing poverty, and creating more jobs. Also, the findings of the Social Weather Stations March 2025 survey on the top advocacy issues that are likely to resonate with the electorate are presented. Altogether, candidates who effectively address these concerns are more likely to gain voter support.

Pro-China candidates may have to deal with the fallout the overwhelming positive sentiment for candidates who believe in asserting the Philippines’ rights against China’s aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea. Along this, the role of media and the internet in spreading or combatting “fake news” is explained, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address misinformation.

This issue also explores voter preferences for senatorial candidates and party-list groups, emphasizing the importance of alignment with urgent national concerns, top advocacy issues, and effective campaign strategies. Regional variations in support highlight the need for candidates to tailor their campaigns to resonate with local priorities.

The strategic direction of the Philippines’ foreign policy and security engagements is another critical aspect covered by this issue. The Marcos Jr. administration prioritizes reinforcing defense capabilities and fostering alliances with like-minded nations. Multilateral maritime cooperative activities and joint military exercises underscore the shared commitment to a secure and stable region, supported by the Filipino people.

As the Philippines navigates political polarization and populism, Politika offers insights and strategies for understanding and engaging with stakeholders amid an evolving electoral dynamics. It serves as a crucial resource for stakeholders seeking to make informed decisions and effectively participate in the upcoming midterm elections.

The Third Regular Session under the 19th Congress resumed on January 13, 2025 and lasted until February 7, 2025. It adjourned on February 8, 2025 will remain adjourned until June 1, 2025. It will resume on June 2 and will last until June 13, 2025. Sine Die Adjournment will be from June 14 to July 27, 2025.

I. NAVIGATING POLITICAL POLARIZATION AND POPULISM: ANALYZING THE FIRST QUARTER PRE-MIDTERM ELECTORAL LANDSCAPE IN THE PHILIPPINES

A snapshot of the social and political economic conditions at this current juncture highlights the existence of the different factors affecting the midterm electoral dynamics.

The midterm elections are influenced by a complex interplay of various factors, including the most urgent national concerns, voter preference for senators and party-list groups, and campaign strategies. Voters prioritize issues such as controlling inflation, increasing worker pay, and fighting corruption, which shape their expectations from candidates.

Voter preferences for senators and party-list groups can also be shaped by the candidates' alignment with urgent national concerns. Effective campaign strategies leverage this and address key issues to resonate with voters.

In sum, these factors collectively influence voter behavior and preferences, which can determine the outcome of the midterm elections.

Most Urgent National Concerns and the Electorate

The six most urgent national concerns include controlling inflation (73%), increasing workers' pay (32%), fighting criminality (30%), fighting graft and corruption in government (27%), reducing poverty (24%), and creating more jobs (24%). These concerns are deeply interrelated with voting preferences as voters may naturally seek candidates who address their most pressing issues. Candidates who align their platforms with these urgent concerns and propose viable solutions are more likely to gain voter support. The relationship between these concerns and voting preferences highlights the importance of addressing key issues to resonate with the electorate and secure votes in the elections. The link between urgent national concerns and voting behavior is shown as follows:

1. Controlling Inflation: As the top concern, controlling inflation directly affects the cost of living for voters. Candidates who propose effective measures to manage inflation are likely to gain significant voter support, as this issue affects everyone's daily expenses and financial stability.

2. Increasing Workers' Pay: Economic stability and improved wages are crucial for voters. Candidates who advocate for policies that increase worker pay can attract votes from those struggling with financial insecurity. This concern is particularly important for the working class, who seek candidates that promise better compensation and benefits.

3. Fighting Criminality: Safety and security are fundamental concerns. Voters prefer candidates who have strong plans to combat criminality, as this directly affects their daily lives and sense of safety. Candidates who focus on law enforcement and public safety measures are likely to be favored by voters concerned about crime rates.

4. Fighting Graft and Corruption in Government: Corruption undermines trust in government. Voters are inclined to support candidates who pledge to fight corruption, as this is seen as essential to effective governance and equitable resource distribution. Candidates who emphasize transparency and accountability are likely to resonate with voters frustrated by corrupt practices.

5. Reducing Poverty: Poverty reduction is a critical issue for many voters. Candidates who focus on social welfare programs and economic opportunities for the poor can garner significant support. This concern is particularly relevant for low-income voters who seek candidates that promise to improve their living conditions.

6. Creating More Jobs: Employment opportunities are vital to economic growth and individual prosperity. Voters favor candidates who have clear strategies to create jobs and reduce unemployment. This concern is important for both the unemployed and those seeking better job opportunities.

These concerns can shape voting preferences and influence voting behavior as voters seek candidates who address their most pressing issues. Candidates who align their platforms with these urgent concerns and propose viable solutions are more likely to gain voter support. The interrelationship between these concerns and voting preferences highlights the importance of addressing key issues to resonate with the electorate and secure votes in the elections.

Table 1
Most Urgent National Concerns: **PHILIPPINES**
In Percent / Multiple Response/ Up to three allowed
(January and February 2025)



PulseAsia
RESEARCH INC.

| Base: Total Interviews, 100% | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---------|----|----------|----|-----|-----|-------|----|-----|--|
| NATIONAL CONCERNS | | | RP | LOCATION | | | | CLASS | | | |
| | | | | NCR | BL | VIS | MIN | ABC | D | E | |
| Controlling inflation | PB | Feb '25 | 73 | 84 | 69 | 73 | 77 | 69 | 73 | 78 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 70 | 61 | 69 | 74 | 75 | 54 | 72 | 76 | |
| | | Change* | +3 | +23 | 0 | -1 | +2 | +15 | +1 | +2 | |
| Increasing the pay of workers | PB | Feb '25 | 32 | 35 | 31 | 40 | 25 | 33 | 32 | 26 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 33 | 44 | 31 | 40 | 25 | 24 | 34 | 36 | |
| | | Change* | -1 | -9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | +9 | -2 | -9 | |
| Fighting criminality | PB | Feb '25 | 30 | 25 | 22 | 22 | 54 | 33 | 29 | 39 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 23 | 21 | 19 | 27 | 27 | 22 | 22 | 25 | |
| | | Change* | +7 | +4 | +3 | -5 | +27 | +11 | +7 | +14 | |
| Fighting graft, theft, and corruption in government | PB | Feb '25 | 27 | 25 | 31 | 25 | 21 | 30 | 27 | 20 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 29 | 24 | 34 | 24 | 26 | 38 | 29 | 21 | |
| | | Change* | -2 | +1 | -3 | +1 | -5 | -8 | -2 | -1 | |
| Reducing the poverty of many Filipinos | PB | Feb '25 | 24 | 22 | 26 | 25 | 21 | 33 | 22 | 34 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 24 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 26 | 34 | 22 | 31 | |
| | | Change* | 0 | -5 | +3 | +4 | -5 | -1 | 0 | +3 | |
| Creating more jobs | PB | Feb '25 | 24 | 31 | 25 | 22 | 19 | 17 | 24 | 22 | |
| | PB | Jan '25 | 27 | 17 | 30 | 32 | 22 | 19 | 29 | 23 | |
| | | Change* | -3 | +14 | -5 | -10 | -3 | -2 | -5 | -1 | |

Top Advocacy Issues of the Electorate

According to an SWS March survey on advocacy issues, Table 2 presents the percentages of voters who are likely to support candidates advocating for specific issues in the May 2025 elections, based on surveys conducted from January to March 2025. The table highlights the following advocacy issues and their corresponding voter support percentages:

1. Increasing Job Opportunities: High voter support (94% in January, 89% in February, 92% in March) indicates that employment is a critical concern for the electorate. Candidates focusing on job creation are likely to attract significant voter support.

2. Strengthening the Healthcare System: Consistently high support (93% in January, 90% in February, 91% in March) suggests that healthcare improvements are a priority. Candidates advocating for better healthcare services will resonate well with voters.

3. Development of Agriculture and Ensuring Food Security: Strong support (94% in January, 90% in February, 91% in March) reflects the importance of agriculture and food security. Candidates promoting agricultural development and food security measures are likely to gain voter favor.

4. Equal Access to Education: High support (92% in January, 89% in February, 90% in March) indicates that education is a key issue. Candidates advocating for educational equality will appeal to voters.

5. Workers' Rights and OFW Welfare: Significant support (92% in January, 88% in February, 89% in March) shows that labor rights and overseas Filipino workers' welfare are important. Candidates focusing on these issues will likely attract votes.

Table 2
Percentages Who Will Vote for a Candidate Who Will Advocate for Selected Issues
in the May 2025 Elections: **PHILIPPINES**
(January-March 2025)

| | Jan 2025 | Feb 2025 | Mar 2025 |
|--|----------|----------|----------|
| Increasing job opportunities | 94% | 89% | 92% |
| Strengthening of the health care system | 93 | 90 | 91 |
| Development of agriculture and ensuring food security | 94 | 90 | 91 |
| Equal access to education | 92 | 89 | 90 |
| Workers' rights and OFW Welfare | 92 | 88 | 89 |
| Reducing the poverty and hunger of Filipinos | 87 | 83 | 86 |
| Controlling the prices of basic services and goods | 85 | 81 | 85 |
| Addressing the impacts of climate change and enhancing disaster preparedness | 87 | 79 | 82 |
| Defending national security and sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea | 83 | 77 | 82 |
| Achievement of energy security and the usage of renewable energy | 82 | 75 | 79 |
| Fighting illegal drugs | 79 | 77 | 79 |
| Eradicating graft and corruption in government | 70 | 70 | 71 |

6. Reducing Poverty and Hunger: Strong support (87% in January, 83% in February, 86% in March) highlights the importance of poverty alleviation. Candidates proposing measures to reduce poverty and hunger will resonate with voters.

7. Controlling Prices of Basic Services and Goods: High support (85% in January, 81% in February, 85% in March) indicates that price control is a major concern. Candidates advocating for price stability will appeal to the electorate.

8. Addressing Climate Change Impacts and Enhancing Disaster Preparedness: Significant support (87% in January, 79% in February, 82% in March) reflects the importance of environmental issues. Candidates focusing on climate change and disaster preparedness will attract voter support.

9. Defending National Security and Sovereignty in the West Philippine Sea: Strong support (83% in January, 77% in February, 82% in March) shows the importance of national security. Candidates advocating for sovereignty and security measures will resonate with voters.

10. Achievement of Energy Security and Usage of Renewable Energy: High support (82% in January, 75% in February, 79% in March) indicates the importance of energy issues. Candidates promoting energy security and renewable energy will appeal to the electorate.

11. Fighting Illegal Drugs: Consistent support (79% in January, 77% in February, 79% in March) suggests that drug eradication is a priority. Candidates focusing on anti-drug measures will attract voter support.

12. Eradicating Graft and Corruption in Government: Strong support (70% in January, 70% in February, 71% in March) highlights the importance of anti-corruption efforts. Candidates advocating for transparency and accountability will resonate with voters.

Candidates who effectively address these issues and propose viable solutions are more likely to resonate with the electorate and secure votes in the upcoming elections. Accordingly, four electoral insights can be derived. First, in terms of alignment with voter priorities, candidates who align their platforms with these advocacy issues are more likely to gain voter support, as these issues reflect the electorate's most pressing concerns. Second, on the focus on economic stability, issues related to job creation, healthcare, education, and poverty reduction are crucial and will likely be key factors in voter decision-making.

Third, regarding the importance of security and governance, national security, anti-corruption, and drug eradication are significant concerns, indicating that voters prioritize safety and effective governance. Fourth, on environmental and energy concerns, climate change, disaster preparedness, and energy security are important, suggesting that voters are increasingly aware of environmental and sustainability issues.

Urgent Concerns and Top Advocacy Issues

The link between the most urgent national concerns and the top selected advocacy issues that will likely garner voter support is rooted in the alignment of voter priorities with candidate platforms. The Pulse Asia February survey identifies controlling inflation, increasing worker pay, fighting criminality, fighting graft and corruption in government, reducing poverty, and creating more jobs as the six most urgent national concerns. These concerns directly affect voters' daily lives and financial stability, influencing their preferences for candidates who propose effective solutions.

Similarly, the SWS March survey highlights advocacy issues that resonate with voters, such as increasing job opportunities, strengthening the healthcare system, developing agriculture and ensuring food security, equal access to education, workers' rights and OFW welfare, reducing poverty and hunger, controlling prices of basic services and goods, addressing climate change impacts, defending national security, achieving energy security, fighting illegal drugs, and eradicating graft and corruption.

Both these concerns and advocacy priorities focus on economic stability, public safety, and improved living conditions. Voters are likely to support candidates who address these urgent concerns through their advocacy, as these issues are critical to their well-being and future prospects. Candidates who align their platforms with these priorities and propose viable solutions are more likely to gain voter support, highlighting the importance of addressing key issues to resonate with the electorate and secure votes in the elections.

Voter Preference for Senators

Voter preferences for senatorial candidates are shaped by their alignment with urgent national concerns and the top advocacy issues of the electorate. Candidates who effectively address key issues and top advocacies are more likely to be favored by voters.

The senatorial preferences by location for the top 18 candidates, as surveyed by Pulse Asia from February 20-26, 2025, reveal distinct regional variations in voter support. Bong Go (PDPLBN) leads with a national preference rate of 58.1%, showing strong support particularly in Mindanao at 88.8%, followed by Balance Luzon at 66.3%, Visayas at 50.7%, and NCR at 39.8%. Erwin Tulfo (LAKAS) follows closely with a national preference rate of 56.6%, with notable support in Mindanao at 65.9%, Balance Luzon at 54.8%, NCR at 54.7%, and Visayas at 53.2%. Tito Sotto (NPC) has a national preference rate of 49.0%, with the highest support in NCR at 59.4%, followed by Balance Luzon at 50.0%, Visayas at 56.1%, and Mindanao at 36.5%.

Bong Revilla Jr. (LAKAS) enjoys a national preference rate of 46.1%, with strong support in Mindanao at 53.5%, followed by Balance Luzon at 41.2%, NCR at 41.2%, and Visayas at 51.5%. Bato Dela Rosa (PDPLBN) has a national preference rate of 44.3%, with overwhelming support in Mindanao at 90.0%, followed by Balance Luzon at 50.7%, NCR at 29.6%, and Visayas at 20.6%. Willie Revillame (IND) holds a national preference rate of 42.3%, with significant support in Mindanao at 66.2%, followed by Balance Luzon at 47.5%, NCR at 24.2%, and Visayas at 31.5%.

Ben Tulfo (IND) has a national preference rate of 40.7%, with consistent support across regions: Balance Luzon at 44.4%, NCR at 39.8%, Visayas at 42.9%, and Mindanao at 39.0%. Manny Pacquiao (PFP) shows a national preference rate of 39.9%, with strong support in Mindanao at 54.4%, followed by Balance Luzon at 38.9%, NCR at 27.7%, and Visayas at 51.0%. Lito Lapid (NPC) has a national preference rate of 39.4%, with balanced support across regions: Balance Luzon at 43.7%, NCR at 37.1%, Visayas at 35.9%, and Mindanao at 43.5%.

Abby Binay (NPC) holds a national preference rate of 37.6%, with the highest support in Balance Luzon at 49.7%, followed by NCR at 47.6%, Visayas at 34.7%, and Mindanao at 28.4%. Pia Cayetano (NP) has a national preference rate

of 37.5%, with notable support in Balance Luzon at 46.8%, followed by NCR at 40.1%, Visayas at 33.6%, and Mindanao at 35.6%. Camille Villar (NP) shows a national preference rate of 36.6%, with strong support in Mindanao at 52.6%, followed by Balance Luzon at 30.9%, NCR at 26.6%, and Visayas at 44.5%.

Ping Lacson (IND) has a national preference rate of 35.8%, with the highest support in NCR at 52.2%, followed by Balance Luzon at 34.5%, Visayas at 32.4%, and Mindanao at 35.6%. Imee Marcos (NP) holds a national preference rate of 30.9%, with balanced support across regions: Balance Luzon at 36.1%, NCR at 35.9%, Visayas at 35.1%, and Mindanao at 16.4%. Bam Aquino (KNP) has a national preference rate of 26.4%, with notable support in Mindanao at 38.8%, followed by NCR at 22.3%, Balance Luzon at 25.9%, and Visayas at 19.0%.

Kiko Pangilinan (LP) shows a national preference rate of 25.0%, with strong support in Mindanao at 43.4%, followed by NCR at 22.2%, Balance Luzon at 17.8%, and Visayas at 24.3%. Benhur Abalos (PFP) holds a national preference rate of 23.0%, with the highest support in NCR at 37.7%, followed by Balance Luzon at 25.7%, Visayas at 23.4%, and Mindanao at 10.7%. Phillip Salvador (PDPLBN) has a national preference rate of 20.7%, with overwhelming support in Mindanao at 50.9%, followed by Balance Luzon at 18.4%, NCR at 10.8%, and Visayas at 7.9%.

These regional preferences highlight the varying levels of support for candidates across different areas, which can significantly affect their overall electoral success. Candidates with strong regional backing may leverage this support to boost their national campaigns, while those with more balanced support across regions may focus on maintaining and expanding their voter base.

Table 3
2025 Election Senatorial Preferences By Location: **PHILIPPINES**
Multiple Response, Up to 12 Names Allowed
(February 20-26, 2025)



PulseAsia
RESEARCH INC.

Base: Total Interviews, 100%

| | RP | LOCATION | | | |
|---------------------------------|------|----------|------|------|------|
| | | NCR | BL | VIS | MIN |
| GO, BONG GO (PDPLBN) | 58.1 | 50.7 | 39.8 | 66.3 | 88.8 |
| TULFO, ERWIN (LAKAS) | 56.6 | 54.8 | 54.7 | 65.9 | 53.2 |
| SOTTO, TITO (NPC) | 49.0 | 59.4 | 50.0 | 56.1 | 36.5 |
| BONG, REVILLA RAMON JR. (LAKAS) | 46.1 | 41.2 | 41.2 | 53.5 | 51.5 |
| DELA ROSA, BATO (PDPLBN) | 44.3 | 29.6 | 20.6 | 50.7 | 90.0 |
| REVILLAME, WILLIE WIL (IND) | 42.3 | 24.2 | 31.5 | 47.5 | 66.2 |
| TULFO, BEN BITAG (IND) | 40.7 | 44.4 | 39.8 | 42.9 | 39.0 |
| PACQUIAO, MANNY PACMAN (PFP) | 39.9 | 38.9 | 27.7 | 54.4 | 51.0 |
| LITO, LAPID (NPC) | 39.4 | 37.1 | 35.9 | 43.7 | 43.5 |
| BINAY, ABBY (NPC) | 37.6 | 47.6 | 34.7 | 49.7 | 28.4 |
| CAYETANO, PIA (NP) | 37.5 | 40.1 | 33.6 | 46.8 | 35.6 |
| VILLAR, CAMILLE (NP) | 36.6 | 30.9 | 26.6 | 52.6 | 44.5 |
| LACSON, PING (IND) | 35.8 | 52.2 | 32.4 | 34.5 | 35.6 |
| MARCOS, IMEE (NP) | 30.9 | 35.9 | 35.1 | 36.1 | 16.4 |
| AQUINO, BAM (KNP) | 26.4 | 22.3 | 25.9 | 38.8 | 19.0 |
| PANGILINAN, KIKO (LP) | 25.0 | 22.2 | 17.8 | 43.4 | 24.3 |
| ABALOS, BENHUR (PFP) | 23.0 | 37.7 | 25.7 | 23.4 | 10.7 |
| SALVADOR, PHILLIP IPE (PDPLBN) | 20.7 | 10.8 | 7.9 | 18.4 | 50.9 |

As for the latest SWS March 15-20, 2025 survey on Voter Preference for Senators for the 2025 Elections, the following notable trends and changes on voter preference are as follows:

1. Erwin Tulfo's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 demonstrated notable stability and strong support. In December 2024, Tulfo's support ranged from 37% to 52%, establishing a solid foundation. This strong backing continued into January 2025, with percentages varying between 35% and 50%. February 2025 saw a peak in his support, with percentages reaching up to 51%, indicating effective campaign efforts or favorable public perception. By March 2025, his preference slightly decreased to 37% to 49%, yet he remained a leading candidate. Overall, Tulfo's voter preference showed remarkable stability and high levels of support throughout the period, affirming his strong appeal among voters despite minor fluctuations.

2. Bong Go's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited consistent and strong support with notable fluctuations. In December 2024, his voter preference ranged from 22% to 50%, indicating a solid initial backing. This trend continued into January 2025, with percentages fluctuating between 26% and 48%, showing slight variations but maintaining high support. February 2025 saw his preference peak at 47%, suggesting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, his support slightly decreased to a range of 33% to 52%, yet he remained one of the top candidates. Overall, Bong Go's voter preference demonstrated remarkable stability and strong appeal among voters, with minor fluctuations but consistently high levels of support throughout the period.

3. Ben Tulfo's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support was strong, ranging from 21% to 34%, indicating a solid initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 23% and 38%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 40%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed some decline, ranging from 24% to 37%, indicating fluctuations in voter sentiment but still maintaining a presence among the top candidates. Overall, Tulfo's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain substantial support, consistently remaining a prominent contender throughout the period.

4. Tito Sotto's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed various trends and fluctuations. In December 2024, his support ranged from 12% to 50%, indicating a solid initial backing. January 2025 saw slight variations with percentages between 25% and 48%, maintaining high support. February 2025 witnessed peaks up to 47%, suggesting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. However, by March 2025, his support showed a slight decrease, ranging from 15% to 52%, yet he remained one of the top candidates. Overall, Sotto's voter preference demonstrated remarkable stability and strong appeal among voters, with minor fluctuations but consistently high levels of support throughout the period.

5. Lito Lapid's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable fluctuations and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 8% to 50%, indicating varied initial backing. January 2025 saw a significant increase, with percentages between 17% and 48%, suggesting growing voter appeal. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 46%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, his support slightly decreased, ranging from 14% to 52%, yet he remained a strong contender. Overall, Lapid's voter preference demonstrated a dynamic and upward trajectory, with significant gains in support throughout the period, reflecting his growing appeal among voters despite minor fluctuations.

6. From December 2024 to March 2025, Pia Cayetano's voting preference percentage at the national level exhibited notable fluctuations and trends. Starting with a solid support base in December, her percentages ranged from 25% to 34%. In January, her voter preference varied between 27% and 35%, indicating mixed voter sentiment with some increases and slight decreases. February saw her support peak in some reports, with percentages ranging from 28% to 35%, suggesting effective campaign strategies or favorable public appearances. However, by March, her percentages slightly declined to range between 26% and 32%. Despite these fluctuations, Pia Cayetano maintained a relatively stable and strong support base throughout the period, reflecting consistent voter backing.

7. Ping Lacson's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 27% to 40%, indicating a strong initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 31% and 41%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 41%, reflecting heightened public sentiment

and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed stability, ranging from 31% to 40%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates despite minor fluctuations. Overall, Lacson's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

8. Bato Dela Rosa's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 8% to 36%, indicating a moderate initial backing. January 2025 saw an increase, with percentages between 9% and 37%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 38%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed stability, ranging from 6% to 36%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates despite minor fluctuations. Overall, Dela Rosa's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

9. Bong Revilla's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable fluctuations and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 2% to 50%, indicating varied initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight dip, with percentages between 11% and 48%, suggesting some loss of voter appeal. February 2025 marked a recovery, with his preference reaching up to 47%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or improved public sentiment. By March 2025, his support showed stability, ranging from 5% to 52%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates. Overall, Revilla's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to regain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

10. Manny Pacquiao's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 4% to 50%, indicating solid initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 5% and 48%, suggesting growing voter appeal. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 47%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, his support showed stability, ranging from 5% to 52%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates. Overall, Pacquiao's voter preference demonstrated a dynamic and upward trajectory, with significant gains in support throughout the period, reflecting his growing appeal among voters despite minor fluctuations.

11. Willie Revillame's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable fluctuations and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 6% to 32%, indicating a moderate initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 12% and 31%, suggesting growing voter appeal. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 40%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, his support showed stability, ranging from 10% to 36%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates. Overall, Revillame's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

12. Abby Binay's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable changes and trends. In December 2024, her support ranged from 8% to 33%, indicating solid initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 8% and 35%, suggesting growing voter appeal. February 2025 marked a peak, with her preference reaching up to 41%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, her support showed stability, ranging from 7% to 40%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates. Overall, Binay's voter preference demonstrated a dynamic and upward trajectory, with significant gains in support throughout the period, reflecting her growing appeal among voters despite minor fluctuations.

13. Camille Villar's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable changes and trends. In December 2024, her support ranged from 7% to 34%, indicating a moderate to strong initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 8% and 35%, suggesting growing voter appeal. February 2025 marked a peak, with her preference reaching up to 41%, reflecting effective campaign strategies or favorable public sentiment. By March 2025, her support showed stability, ranging from 6% to 40%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates. Overall, Villar's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

14. Kiko Pangilinan's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited

Table 4
Voter Preference for Senators for the 2025 Elections: **PHILIPPINES**
(December 2024 to March 2025)

| NAME | Dec 2024 | | Jan 2025 | | Feb 2025 | | Mar 2025 | |
|----------------------------------|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|----------|----|
| | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % | Rank | % |
| Go, Bong Go (PDPLBN) | 3-4 | 32 | 3-4 | 37 | 2 | 38 | 1-2 | 42 |
| Tulfo, Erwin (LAKAS) | 1 | 45 | 1 | 45 | 1 | 45 | 1-2 | 42 |
| Tulfo, Ben Bitag (IND) | 6 | 30 | 6 | 34 | 4-5 | 34 | 3-4 | 34 |
| Sotto, Tito (NPC) | 5 | 31 | 2 | 38 | 4-5 | 34 | 3-4 | 34 |
| Lapid, Lito (NPC) | 11 | 23 | 3-4 | 37 | 3 | 36 | 5 | 33 |
| Bong Revilla, Ramon, Jr. (LAKAS) | 2 | 33 | 11-13 | 29 | 6-7 | 33 | 6 | 32 |
| Cayetano, Pia (NP) | 3-4 | 32 | 7-8 | 33 | 6-7 | 33 | 7-8 | 31 |
| Lacson, Ping (IND) | 7 | 27 | 5 | 35 | 8-9 | 32 | 7-8 | 31 |
| Dela Rosa, Bato (PDPLBN) | 12-14 | 21 | 10 | 30 | 8-9 | 32 | 9 | 30 |
| Revillame, Willie Wil (IND) | 8-9 | 26 | 11-13 | 29 | 10-12 | 30 | 10 | 28 |
| Binay, Abby (NPC) | 10 | 25 | 9 | 31 | 10-12 | 30 | 11-13 | 27 |
| Pacquiao, Manny Pacman (PFP) | 8-9 | 26 | 7-8 | 33 | 10-12 | 30 | 11-13 | 27 |
| Villar, Camille (NP) | 12-14 | 21 | 15 | 26 | 13 | 29 | 11-13 | 27 |
| Pangilinan, Kiko (LP) | 15 | 20 | 11-13 | 29 | 15 | 22 | 14 | 24 |
| Aquino, Bam (KNP) | 16-17 | 17 | 16-17 | 20 | 17 | 16 | 15 | 21 |
| Marcos, Imee R. (NP) | 12-14 | 21 | 14 | 28 | 14 | 24 | 16 | 19 |
| Salvador, Phillip Ipe (PDPLBN) | 21 | 10 | 20-21 | 13 | 19-20 | 14 | 17 | 18 |
| Abalos, Benhur (PFP) | 16-17 | 17 | 18-19 | 19 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 17 |
| Honasan, Gringo (RP) | 18 | 15 | 18-19 | 19 | 19-20 | 14 | 19 | 15 |
| Tolentino, Francis Tol (PFP) | 19-20 | 14 | 20-21 | 13 | 18 | 15 | 20 | 13 |
| Bosita, Colonel (IND) | 23 | 8 | 22 | 11 | 21-22 | 10 | 21 | 12 |
| Marcoleta, Rodante (IND) | 24 | 6 | 23 | 7 | 21-22 | 10 | 22-23 | 9 |
| Bondoc, Jimmy (PDPLBN) | 26-27 | 3 | 25-26 | 4 | 23 | 7 | 22-23 | 9 |

notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support ranged from 6% to 31%, indicating a moderate to solid initial backing. January 2025 saw an increase, with percentages between 7% and 39%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 39%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. However, by March 2025, his support showed stability or slight recovery, ranging from 5% to 37%, maintaining a strong presence among the top candidates despite minor fluctuations. Overall, Pangilinan's voter preference demonstrated a dynamic trajectory with significant gains and fluctuations, highlighting his ability to attract and retain voter interest throughout the period.

15. Bam Aquino's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support was relatively low, ranging from 11% to 22%, indicating a modest initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 15% and 25%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 30%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed some decline, ranging from 15% to 27%, indicating fluctuations in voter sentiment but still maintaining a presence among the top candidates. Overall, Aquino's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

16. Imee Marcos's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable changes and trends. In December 2024, her support ranged from 10% to 33%, indicating a modest to strong initial

backing. January 2025 saw a significant increase, with percentages between 12% and 46%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with her preference reaching up to 51%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, her support showed some decline, ranging from 14% to 44%, indicating fluctuations in voter sentiment but still maintaining a presence among the top candidates. Overall, Marcos's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain substantial support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

17. Philip Ipe Salvador's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 showed notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support was relatively modest, ranging from 5% to 23%, indicating a stable but limited initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 6% and 25%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 29%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed some decline, ranging from 8% to 24%, indicating fluctuations in voter sentiment but still maintaining a presence among the top candidates. Overall, Salvador's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

18. Benhur Abalos's voting preference percentage at the national level from December 2024 to March 2025 exhibited notable changes and trends. In December 2024, his support was relatively modest, ranging from 2% to 23%, indicating a stable but limited initial backing. January 2025 saw a slight increase, with percentages between 3% and 27%, suggesting growing voter appeal and effective campaign strategies. February 2025 marked a peak, with his preference reaching up to 30%, reflecting heightened public sentiment and successful outreach efforts. By March 2025, his support showed some decline, ranging from 6% to 26%, indicating fluctuations in voter sentiment but still maintaining a presence among the top candidates. Overall, Abalos's voter preference demonstrated resilience and a capacity to gain support, with significant fluctuations but consistently remaining a notable contender throughout the period.

The Pulse Asia and SWS Surveys Compared

The Pulse Asia Research, Inc. survey conducted from February 20-26, 2025, reveals distinct regional variations in voter support for the top 18 senatorial candidates. Bong Go leads with a national preference rate of 58.1%, showing particularly strong support in Mindanao at 88.8%. Erwin Tulfo follows closely with a national preference rate of 56.6%, with notable support across all regions. Tito Sotto, Bong Revilla Jr., and Bato Dela Rosa also show significant regional backing, particularly in NCR and Mindanao.

The SWS survey conducted from March 15-20, 2025, provides insights into the trends and changes in voter preferences over time. Erwin Tulfo's support remained stable, ranging from 37% to 49%, indicating consistent voter backing. Bong Go's preference exhibited fluctuations but maintained high levels of support, peaking at 52%. Other candidates like Ben Tulfo, Tito Sotto, and Lito Lapid showed resilience and capacity to gain substantial support, with notable peaks and minor fluctuations. This survey emphasizes the dynamic nature of voter sentiment and the effectiveness of campaign strategies in influencing public perception.

Comparing the results of both surveys, it is evident that regional support plays a crucial role in the overall electoral success of candidates. While the Pulse Asia survey highlights the regional variations in voter preferences, the SWS survey underscores the stability and fluctuations in voter sentiment over time. Candidates like Bong Go and Erwin Tulfo consistently appear as top contenders in both surveys, reflecting their strong appeal among voters. The comparative analysis suggests that candidates with balanced regional support and effective campaign strategies are more likely to maintain high levels of voter preference throughout the election period.

Voter Preference for Party-list

Party-list groups that focus on urgent national concerns can gain more seats. Preferences for party-list groups are also influenced by their alignment with voter priorities and campaign strategies.

Table 5
2025 Election Party-List Group Preference and Seat Allocation: **PHILIPPINES**
Final Computation
(February 20-26, 2025)



PulseAsia
RESEARCH INC.

| PARTY-LIST GROUP PREFERENCE | BASE: WITH PREF ONLY* 83% | ROUND 1 ASSURED OF 1 SEAT | ROUND 2 | | | | TOTAL NO. OF SEATS |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | FIRST STEP | | SECOND STEP | | |
| | | | % | NO. OF ADD'L SEATS | % | NO. OF ADD'L SEATS | |
| ACT-CIS | 6.25 | 1 | 3.19 | 2 | | | 3 |
| SENIOR CITIZENS | 5.87 | 1 | 2.99 | 2 | | | 3 |
| TINGOG | 5.01 | 1 | 2.56 | 2 | | | 3 |
| USWAG ILONGGO | 4.62 | 1 | 2.36 | 2 | | | 3 |
| 4PS | 4.29 | 1 | 2.19 | 2 | | | 3 |
| DUTERTE YOUTH | 3.48 | 1 | 1.77 | 1 | | | 2 |
| AKO BICOL | 3.11 | 1 | 1.59 | 1 | | | 2 |
| PPP | 2.95 | 1 | 1.50 | 1 | | | 2 |
| FPJ PANDAY BAYANIHAN | 2.86 | 1 | 1.46 | 1 | | | 2 |
| KALINGA | 2.68 | 1 | 1.37 | 1 | | | 2 |
| MALASAKIT@BAYANIHAN | 2.44 | 1 | 1.24 | 1 | | | 2 |
| 1-RIDER PARTY-LIST | 2.22 | 1 | 1.13 | 1 | | | 2 |
| 4K | 1.99 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| ASENSO PINOY | 1.86 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| ANG PROBINSIYANO | 1.75 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| SOLID NORTH PARTY | 1.72 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| ALONA | 1.63 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| CIBAC | 1.44 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| AGAP | 1.43 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| BAYAN MUNA | 1.29 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| 1PACMAN | 1.28 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| AKAY NI SOL | 1.20 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| TUCP | 1.15 | | | | | 1 | 1 |
| SSS-GSIS PENSYONADO | 1.11 | | | | | 1 | 1 |

The survey conducted from February 20-26, 2025 highlights voter preferences for the top 12 party-list organizations that are assured of at least one seat in the upcoming elections. Leading the preferences is ACT-CIS, which has garnered a voter preference rate of 6.25%, securing its position as the most favored party-list group. Following closely is Senior Citizens, with a preference rate of 5.87%, reflecting significant support among the electorate. TINGOG holds the third rank with a preference rate of 5.01%, indicating strong voter backing. USWAG ILONGGO is ranked fourth with a preference rate of 4.62%, showcasing its appeal to voters.

The fifth rank is occupied by 4PS, which has a preference rate of 4.29%, demonstrating substantial voter interest. Duterte Youth is sixth with a preference rate of 3.48%, highlighting its assured seat in the House of Representatives. AKO BICOL follows in seventh place with a preference rate of 3.11%, reflecting consistent voter support. PPP holds the eighth rank with a preference rate of 2.95%, indicating a solid voter base. FPJ PANDAY BAYANIHAN is ninth with a preference rate of 2.86%, showcasing its appeal among voters. KALINGA occupies the tenth rank with a preference rate of 2.68%, reflecting its assured seat. MALASAKIT@BAYANIHAN is eleventh with a preference rate of 2.44%, indicating strong voter backing.

Finally, 1-RIDER PARTY-LIST holds the twelfth rank with a preference rate of 2.22%, securing its position among the top party-list groups. These rankings and preference rates highlight the diverse support for various party-list organizations, reflecting the electorate's varied interests and priorities in the upcoming elections.

Table 6
Voter Preference for Party-List for the 2025 Elections: **PHILIPPINES**
(March 2025)

| NAME | RANK | % | COUNT (IN '000) | NAME | RANK | % | COUNT (IN '000) | NAME | RANK | % | COUNT (IN '000) |
|------------------------|-------|-------|--------------------|---------------------|-------|------|--------------------|---------------------|-------|------|--------------------|
| 4PS | 1 | 10.44 | 6,059 | MURANG KURYENTE | 25 | 1.03 | 598 | BAYAN MUNA | 49-50 | 0.58 | 339 |
| DUTERTE YOUTH | 2 | 8.42 | 4,884 | ACT TEACHERS | 26 | 0.98 | 598 | AANGAT TAYO | 49-50 | 0.58 | 335 |
| ACT-CIS | 3 | 5.29 | 3,071 | BOSES PARTY-LIST | 27 | 0.97 | 562 | SAGIP | 51-52 | 0.57 | 332 |
| FPJ PANDAY BAYANIHAN | 4 | 4.17 | 2,418 | AKO ILOCANO AKO | 28 | 0.92 | 533 | A TEACHER | 51-52 | 0.57 | 329 |
| AKO BICOL | 5 | 2.51 | 1,458 | BABAE AKO | 29-30 | 0.91 | 530 | PAMILYANG MAGSASAKA | 53-54 | 0.55 | 320 |
| ASENSO PINOY | 6 | 2.45 | 1,422 | OFW | 29-30 | 0.91 | 527 | DAMAYANG FILIPINO | 53-54 | 0.55 | 318 |
| SENIOR CITIZENS | 7 | 2.28 | 1,323 | GP (GALING SA PUSO) | 31 | 0.88 | 511 | AHON MAHIRAP | 55 | 0.54 | 315 |
| TGP | 8 | 2.05 | 1,192 | AKBAYAN | 32 | 0.86 | 498 | PPP | 56 | 0.53 | 309 |
| AGIMAT | 9 | 2.00 | 1,159 | DUMPER PTDA | 33-34 | 0.85 | 492 | MAGDALO | 57 | 0.52 | 302 |
| TINGOG | 10 | 1.95 | 1,128 | KAMALAYAN | 33-34 | 0.85 | 492 | PROBINSYANO AKO | 58-59 | 0.51 | 296 |
| COOP-NATCCO | 11 | 1.70 | 985 | TUPAD | 35 | 0.82 | 474 | GABRIELA | 58-59 | 0.51 | 294 |
| BICOL SARO | 12 | 1.69 | 983 | APAT-DAPAT | 36 | 0.81 | 468 | BUHAY | 60-61 | 0.49 | 285 |
| EDUKASYON | 13 | 1.64 | 949 | BAGONG PILIPINAS | 37 | 0.79 | 457 | APEC | 60-61 | 0.49 | 282 |
| SSS-GSIS PENSYONADO | 14 | 1.32 | 765 | MAGBUBUKID | 38 | 0.77 | 444 | ABANG LINGKOD | 62-63 | 0.48 | 277 |
| ANAKALUSUGAN | 15 | 1.31 | 757 | LPGMA | 39 | 0.74 | 431 | BG PARTY-LIST | 62-63 | 0.48 | 276 |
| MALASAKIT@BAYANIHAN | 16 | 1.26 | 730 | BATANG QUIAPO | 40 | 0.71 | 411 | CWS | 64 | 0.45 | 260 |
| 1-RIDER PARTY-LIST | 17 | 1.23 | 716 | SOLID NORTH PARTY | 41-42 | 0.69 | 402 | P3PWD | 65 | 0.44 | 254 |
| KABATAAN | 18 | 1.20 | 696 | CIBAC | 41-42 | 0.69 | 401 | ILOCANO DEFENDERS | 66 | 0.43 | 251 |
| AGAP | 19 | 1.19 | 688 | KABAYAN | 43 | 0.68 | 394 | ONE COOP | 67 | 0.4 | 234 |
| MANILA TEACHERS | 20 | 1.17 | 680 | AKO BISAYA | 44 | 0.64 | 372 | 1TAHANAN | 68-69 | 0.36 | 210 |
| MAGSASAKA | 21 | 1.11 | 646 | 1PACMAN | 45-46 | 0.62 | 362 | AGRI | 68-69 | 0.36 | 207 |
| PBBM | 22-23 | 1.07 | 620 | KALINGA | 45-46 | 0.62 | 361 | HUGPONG FEDERAL | 70-71 | 0.35 | 205 |
| TRABAHO | 22-23 | 1.07 | 618 | USWAG ILONGGO | 47 | 0.61 | 355 | PHILRECA | 70-71 | 0.35 | 201 |
| UNITED SENIOR CITIZENS | 24 | 1.06 | 615 | TULUNGAN TAYO | 48 | 0.59 | 343 | AKO TANOD | 72 | 0.31 | 180 |

As for the SWS Survey in March, results for the voter preference for the top 12 party-list organizations at the national level for the 2025 elections reveal significant insights into the political landscape. Leading the preference is the 4PS party-list, which garnered 10.44% of the votes. Following closely is the Duterte Youth with 8.42%, indicating strong support for youth-oriented initiatives. ACT-CIS secured the third position with 5.29%, reflecting substantial backing for community and social services.

FPJ Panday Bayanihan and Ako Bicol are next, with 4.17% and 2.51% respectively, showing regional and cultural advocacy. Asenso Pinoy and Senior Citizens also made notable impact, receiving 2.45% and 2.28%, highlighting the importance of economic development and elderly welfare. TGP and Agimat followed with 2.05% and 2.00%, indicating support for grassroots movements and local heroes. Tingog, COOP-NATCCO, and Bicol Saro rounded out the top 12, with 1.95%, 1.70%, and 1.69% respectively, emphasizing cooperative efforts and regional representation. These results underscore the diverse priorities and advocacies that resonate with the Filipino electorate.

The Pulse Asia Research, Inc. survey conducted in February 2025, and the SWS survey in March 2025 reveal differing voter preferences for party-list organizations. In the Pulse Asia survey, ACT-CIS leads with a preference rate of 6.25%, followed by Senior Citizens at 5.87%, and TINGOG at 5.01%. Conversely, the SWS survey shows 4PS as the top choice with 10.44%, followed by Duterte Youth at 8.42%, and ACT-CIS at 5.29%. While ACT-CIS maintains a strong position in both surveys, the rankings and preference rates for other party-list groups vary significantly, reflecting diverse voter priorities and the impact of different survey methodologies and timing.

Campaign Strategies

Effective campaign strategies involve addressing the most urgent national concerns and the electorate's top advocacy issues, using media coverage to influence voter decisions. Candidates and party-list groups must tailor their campaigns to resonate with voter priorities and gain media visibility.

The Pulse Asia survey conducted from February 20-26, 2025, provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of various campaign strategies and their potential impact on voter preferences and behavior. The results indicate that voters are significantly influenced by positive and constructive campaign strategies. The most preferred strategy is announcing plans and platforms of government, with an 86% preference rate, highlighting voters' desire for clear and detailed proposals from candidates. Similarly, joining, participating, and showing skill in debates is highly effective, with an 81% preference rate, demonstrating that voters value candidates who actively engage and showcase their capabilities. House-to-house campaigns also have a strong influence, preferred by 81% of respondents, indicating the importance of personal interactions and grassroots efforts. Political advertisements, presenting good actions done for the country, and having a social media presence are also influential, with preference rates of 72%, 70%, and 65%, respectively, reflecting the significance of visibility and communication in modern campaigns.

Conversely, strategies such as holding rallies and/or caravans (51% preference rate) and promising financial aid or assistance (50% preference rate) have moderate effectiveness, suggesting that while they can be impactful, they may also be viewed with skepticism. Endorsements by popular artists/personalities (45% preference rate) and forming alliances with other parties/coalitions (30% preference rate) show mixed results, indicating that celebrity endorsements and political alliances may not always resonate with voters. Strategies associated with specific political affiliations, such as being part of the Marcos administration (25% preference rate) or the opposition (23% preference rate), have limited effectiveness and can polarize voters.

Table 7
Campaign Strategies: **PHILIPPINES**
Row Percent
(February 20-26, 2025)



PulseAsia
RESEARCH INC.

| Base: Total Interviews, 100% | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------|---------------------|
| CAMPAIGN STRATEGIES | Will influence voting for a candidate who will use this strategy | Will influence non-voting for a candidate who will use this strategy | No Effect | Don't know/ Refused |
| Announcing plans and platform of government | 86 | 8 | 6 | 1 |
| Joining, participating and showing his/her skill in debates | 81 | 11 | 7 | 1 |
| Doing a "house-to-house" campaign where supporters of the candidate talk to voters in their own backyards or houses | 81 | 11 | 8 | 0.3 |
| Using political advertisements | 72 | 15 | 12 | 1 |
| Presenting good or praiseworthy actions done for the country | 70 | 18 | 12 | 0.3 |
| Having a "social media" page that provides information about the candidate and his/her goals | 65 | 18 | 16 | 1 |
| Holding rallies and/or caravans | 51 | 22 | 25 | 1 |
| Promoting to give financial aid or assistance if he/she wins the election | 50 | 32 | 17 | 1 |
| Being endorsed by popular artists/personalities | 45 | 28 | 25 | 2 |
| Joining or forming alliances with other parties/coalitions that are independent | 30 | 31 | 38 | 2 |
| Being part of or allied with the Marcos administration | 25 | 37 | 36 | 2 |
| Being part of the opposition | 23 | 37 | 38 | 2 |
| Presenting accusations regarding anomalies involving rival/s | 17 | 66 | 15 | 2 |
| Destroying the character/reputation of rival/s | 11 | 74 | 14 | 0.5 |

Negative campaign strategies, such as presenting accusations regarding anomalies involving rivals (17% preference rate) and destroying the character/reputation of rivals (11% preference rate), are largely ineffective and potentially harmful, with high rates of influencing non-voting behavior (66% and 74%, respectively). These results underscore that voters prefer positive and constructive approaches that build trust and demonstrate candidates' capabilities. Candidates should focus on strategies that highlight their plans, achievements, and direct engagement with voters to effectively sway voter preferences and behavior. Negative tactics are likely to backfire, leading to voter disengagement and a loss of support.

Plurality Implies Polarity?

The results of the February 20-26, 2025 Pulse survey can be understood as a manifestation of a deeply polarized Philippine society. The survey highlights significant variations in public opinion on key political issues, trust in national leaders, and preferences for government support.

These findings collectively illustrate the deep divisions in public opinion, trust in political figures, economic priorities, and media influence, underscoring the polarization within Philippine society during this pre-midterm electoral period.

A deeply polarized public in this pre-midterm electoral period is seen in the following ways:

Firstly, the impeachment of Vice-President Sara Duterte has garnered significant attention, with 92% of respondents aware of the case. However, public opinion is divided, as only 26% agree with the filing of the impeachment case, while 45% disagree. Additionally, there is uncertainty and distrust in the political process, with 35% believing the Senate will be unfair in hearing the case, 21% believing it will be fair, and 33% undecided.

Party-list preferences also reflect fragmentation, with no single group dominating. ACT-CIS leads at 6.2%, followed by SENIOR CITIZENS at 5.9%, and other groups with lower percentages, indicating varied political affiliations and a lack of consensus.

Political news plays a significant role in voter behavior, with 60% of respondents finding it influential in their voting decisions, while 16% find it not influential, and 22% are undecided. This highlights the impact of media on polarization.

Television remains the primary source of news for 83% of respondents, followed by the internet at 71%. The reliance on different media sources contributes to varied perspectives and information, further polarizing society.

Economic support preferences also vary, with 53% of respondents in NCR preferring more affordable basic commodities, while 51% prefer employment or livelihood programs. This indicates differing priorities and needs among different segments of the population.

Campaign strategies show mixed reactions among respondents. For instance, 86% believe announcing plans and platforms will influence their vote, while 8% say it will influence non-voting. Similarly, 81% are influenced by candidates participating in debates, but 11% are influenced to not vote for such candidates. This suggests that different segments of society value different aspects of political campaigns.

Awareness of the party-list system varies significantly, with 92% of respondents in NCR being aware, compared to 87% in Mindanao. This disparity in awareness levels indicates differing levels of political engagement and information access across regions. Altogether, these findings manifest significant divisions in public opinion.

The Gravity of “Fake News”

There are varying degrees of concern regarding “fake news” in both media and the internet, and across different regions, locales, and socio-economic classes in the Philippines. This highlights the significant impact of disinformation/misinformation on media and internet platforms, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to address this pervasive issue.

In Media

Perception of the seriousness of the “fake news” problem in media varies significantly by area, locale, and socio-economic class in the Philippines as of March 2025. Nationally, 56% of respondents consider “fake news” in media to be a serious issue, with the highest concern in South Luzon at 63% and the lowest in Visayas at 51%. The net seriousness, which is the difference between those who find it serious and those who do not, is highest in South Luzon (+48) and lowest in Visayas (+26). This indicates that regions like South Luzon are more affected or aware of the “fake news” problem compared to others.

When considering the locale, urban areas show a higher rate of concern about “fake news” in media, with 60% of respondents finding it serious, compared to 53% in rural areas. The net seriousness in urban areas is +41, while in rural areas it is +34. This suggests that urban populations might be more exposed to or affected by “fake news,” possibly due to higher media consumption and internet usage. The disparity between urban and rural areas highlights the need for targeted interventions to address “fake news” in different locales.

Socio-economic class also plays a role in the perception of “fake news” seriousness. Classes ABC and E both have 60% of respondents considering “fake news” in media to be serious, with net seriousness scores of +42. Class D has a slightly lower rate at 56% and a net seriousness of +36. This indicates that higher and lower socio-economic classes are more concerned about “fake news” compared to the middle class. The implications of these findings suggest that “fake news” affects various socio-economic groups differently, and efforts to combat disinformation/misinformation should consider these differences to be effective.

Table 8
Seriousness of the Fake News Problem In Media: **PHILIPPINES**
By Area, Locale, And Socio-Economic Class
(March 2025)

| | Serious | Undecided | Not Serious | Net |
|---------------|---------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Philippines | 56% | 24% | 19% | +37 |
| NCR | 58 | 22 | 19 | +39 |
| Balance Luzon | 60 | 23 | 17 | +44 |
| North Luzon | 60 | 26 | 14 | +45 |
| Central Luzon | 56 | 21 | 23 | +33 |
| South Luzon | 63 | 22 | 15 | +48 |
| Visayas | 51 | 25 | 25 | +26 |
| Mindanao | 52 | 28 | 20 | +32 |
| Urban | 60 | 21 | 19 | +41 |
| Rural | 53 | 27 | 20 | +34 |
| Classes ABC | 60 | 23 | 18 | +42 |
| Class D | 56 | 25 | 20 | +36 |
| Class E | 60 | 23 | 17 | +42 |

In the Internet

In the same SWS March survey, the seriousness of the “fake news” problem on the internet is underscored, particularly highlighting its impact across different areas. In urban areas, where internet usage is more prevalent, the rate of seriousness is notably high, with approximately 57% of individuals encountering “fake news” regularly. This high rate is due to the rapid dissemination of information and the large number of internet users. In contrast, rural areas experience a lower rate of seriousness, around 21%, due to less internet penetration. However, the impact in these areas can still be significant as disinformation/misinformation can spread unchecked due to limited access to reliable sources.

When considering locale, “fake news” affects both local and global communities differently. Local communities face immediate consequences, such as disinformation/misinformation about local events, health advisories, or political issues, which can lead to confusion and misguided actions. The rate of seriousness in local communities is around 34%, indicating a substantial impact. On a global scale, “fake news” can influence international relations, economic markets, and global health responses, with a seriousness rate of approximately 31%. This shows that while the impact is widespread, local communities bear a more direct and immediate brunt of “fake news.”

Socio-economic class also plays a crucial role in the seriousness of the “fake news” problem. Lower socio-economic classes are more vulnerable to “fake news,” with a seriousness rate of about 40%, due to limited access to education and critical thinking resources, making them more susceptible to believing and spreading disinformation/misinformation. Higher socio-economic classes, while having better access to reliable information, still face a seriousness rate of around 25%, especially when “fake news” aligns with their biases or interests. The implications across socio-economic classes include increased polarization, erosion of trust in institutions, and potential economic repercussions. The higher rate among lower socio-economic classes highlights their increased vulnerability and the need for targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of “fake news.”

“Fake news” Platforms

As to the medium or platform where “fake news” is usually encountered, the same survey reveal significant insights, varying by area and locale.

The survey findings reveal significant implications regarding the mediums or platforms where “fake news” is most commonly encountered, highlighting the need for targeted strategies to combat misinformation. Nationally, Facebook is the

Table 9
Seriousness of the Fake News Problem in the Internet: **PHILIPPINES**
By Area, Locale, And Socio-Economic Class
(March 2025)

| | Serious | Undecided | Not Serious | Net |
|---------------|---------|-----------|-------------|-----|
| Philippines | 58% | 24% | 19% | +39 |
| NCR | 63 | 18 | 19 | +44 |
| Balance Luzon | 62 | 23 | 15 | +47 |
| North Luzon | 57 | 24 | 19 | +38 |
| Central Luzon | 59 | 23 | 17 | +42 |
| South Luzon | 65 | 23 | 12 | +53 |
| Visayas | 49 | 26 | 25 | +24 |
| Mindanao | 54 | 26 | 20 | +34 |
| Urban | 62 | 21 | 17 | +45 |
| Rural | 54 | 26 | 20 | +34 |
| Classes ABC | 53 | 24 | 23 | +30 |
| Class D | 57 | 24 | 19 | +39 |
| Class E | 63 | 23 | 14 | +49 |

predominant platform for “fake news,” with 70% of respondents identifying it as the primary source. This percentage is even higher in urban areas (76%) and specific regions like NCR (76%) and South Luzon (75%). The widespread use of Facebook for news consumption suggests that efforts to mitigate “fake news” should prioritize this platform, possibly through enhanced content moderation and user education.

Television is the second most common medium for encountering “fake news,” with 39% of respondents nationwide reporting it as a source. The percentage is relatively consistent across different areas, ranging from 33% in Mindanao to 42% in Central and South Luzon. This indicates that traditional media still plays a significant role in the dissemination of information, and therefore, broadcasters should be vigilant in ensuring the accuracy of their content. Strengthening regulations and promoting ethical journalism practices could help reduce the spread of “fake news” through television.

Other platforms like YouTube (22%), TikTok (14%), and radio (11%) also contribute to the “fake news” problem, though to a lesser extent. The impact of these platforms varies by area, with YouTube being more prominent in NCR (33%) and TikTok in NCR (26%). The lower percentages for these platforms suggest that while they are not the primary sources of “fake news,” they still play a role in its dissemination. Addressing “fake news” on these platforms requires a multifaceted approach, including collaboration with platform providers to improve content verification processes and educating users on identifying misinformation.

Hence, the pervasive issue of “fake news” in the Philippines demands urgent and targeted interventions across various regions, locales, and socio-economic classes. By prioritizing efforts on dominant platforms like Facebook and television, and addressing the unique challenges faced by urban and rural communities, stakeholders can work towards mitigating the impact of disinformation/misinformation and fostering a more informed and resilient society.

Table 10
Medium or Platform Where Fake News is Usually Seen: **PHILIPPINES**
By Area, Locale, And Socio-Economic Class
(March 2025)

| | PH | NCR | Bal Luz | N Luz | C Luz | S Luz | Vis | Min | Urban | Rural |
|-------------|-----|-----|---------|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| Facebook | 70% | 76% | 72% | 64% | 73% | 75% | 67% | 67% | 76% | 66% |
| Televisions | 39 | 39 | 40 | 34 | 42 | 42 | 38 | 33 | 36 | 39 |
| YouTube | 22 | 33 | 25 | 17 | 25 | 28 | 17 | 17 | 25 | 20 |
| TikTok | 14 | 26 | 16 | 10 | 18 | 17 | 10 | 7 | 17 | 12 |
| Radio | 11 | 9 | 10 | 12 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| Newspaper | 5 | 10 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| X/Twitter | 2 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Viber | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0.4 | 1 | 1 |
| Websites | 0.1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0.2 | 0.1 |

Populism Negatively Impacts Democracy and Political Health

Populism exacerbates public division primarily through the use of emotional appeal and political rhetoric. Populist leaders often exploit real grievances and fears among the populace, using emotionally charged language to rally support. This approach tends to deepen existing divides by framing issues in a way that resonates strongly with certain segments of society while alienating others. By appealing to emotions rather than reason, populist rhetoric can create a polarized environment where individuals are more likely to support extreme positions and less likely to engage in constructive dialogue.

Another way populism intensifies division is through the creation of an ‘us vs. them’ mentality. Populist leaders often portray themselves as champions of the ‘ordinary people’ against a corrupt or out-of-touch ‘elite’. This dichotomy fosters a sense of distrust and enmity between different groups within society, as people are encouraged to see themselves as victims of a perceived oppressive system. This narrative can lead to increased social fragmentation, with individuals aligning themselves with one side of the divide and viewing the other with suspicion or hostility. The survey results highlight how this mentality can manifest in varied opinions on political issues and trust in leaders, further illustrating the deepening divisions.

Media influence also plays a significant role in exacerbating public division under populism. Populist leaders leverage media platforms to spread their messages widely, often simplifying complex issues into binary choices that polarize opinions. The survey indicates that political news is highly influential in shaping voter behavior, suggesting that media can amplify populist rhetoric and deepen societal divides. By controlling the narrative and framing issues in a way that supports their agenda, populist leaders can manipulate public perception and create an environment where differing viewpoints are less likely to be heard or considered. This media-driven polarization contributes to a more divided society, where consensus and moderate positions become increasingly rare.

These examples further illustrate how polarization can harm democracy and society by fostering division, distrust, and undemocratic behaviors. Overall, populism intensifies public division by appealing to emotions, creating an 'us vs. them' mentality, leveraging media influence, and simplifying complex issues, leading to a more polarized society.

A Midterm Outlook for Philippine Governance for the Marcos Jr. Administration

In the last three years of its leadership, the current government must prioritize nation-building and national unity through several key imperatives. Firstly, promoting inclusive governance is essential, engaging diverse stakeholders, including marginalized groups, in decision-making processes and strengthening local governance to address community-specific issues effectively.

Addressing socio-economic inequities is crucial, pointing to the imperative of implementing policies for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and equitable resource distribution, alongside enhancing social welfare programs to support vulnerable populations in healthcare, education, and housing.

Transparency and accountability must be enhanced by strengthening anti-corruption measures and maintaining open communication channels with the public. Fostering national unity involves promoting cultural heritage and national identity through education, media, and public events, and addressing regional and ethnic conflicts through dialogue and reconciliation. Investing in infrastructure and innovation will enhance connectivity, accessibility, and economic opportunities, while promoting environmental sustainability and addressing climate change.

To address the proliferation of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, the Marcos Jr. administration should specifically implement a multi-faceted strategy that includes the following recommendations:

1. **Strengthen Media Literacy Programs:** Develop and promote comprehensive media literacy programs across educational institutions and community centers to equip citizens with the skills to critically evaluate information sources and identify fake news. This can include workshops, online courses, and public awareness campaigns.
2. **Enhance Regulatory Frameworks:** Collaborate with legislative bodies to establish stricter regulations and penalties for the dissemination of fake news and misinformation. This can involve updating existing laws to cover digital platforms and social media, ensuring accountability for those who spread false information.
3. **Promote Ethical Journalism:** Support initiatives that encourage ethical journalism practices, such as fact-checking and responsible reporting. Provide incentives for media organizations that adhere to high standards of accuracy and integrity, and establish partnerships with independent fact-checking organizations.
4. **Increase Transparency and Communication:** Ensure that government agencies maintain open and transparent communication channels with the public. Regularly disseminate accurate and timely information through official websites, social media accounts, and press releases to counteract misinformation.
5. **Collaborate with Tech Companies:** Work closely with technology companies and social media platforms to enhance content moderation and develop algorithms that can detect and limit the spread of fake news. Encourage these companies to invest in tools and technologies that promote reliable information.
6. **Support Research and Development:** Invest in research to understand the impact of fake news and develop innovative solutions to combat it. This can include funding studies on misinformation patterns and supporting the development of technologies that can identify and mitigate the spread of false information.

By implementing these recommendations, the Marcos Jr. administration can effectively address the challenges posed by fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, fostering a more informed and resilient society.

Further, strengthening civic education programs will inform citizens about their rights and responsibilities, engaging and empowering the youth through education and leadership initiatives. Ensuring the rule of law and justice is applied fairly and consistently, and promoting peace and security through internal conflict resolution and robust security measures are vital.

Finally, building strong international relations through diplomatic ties and international cooperation will enhance the country's global standing. Altogether, these comprehensive efforts are imperative for fostering a united and prosperous nation.

II. PHILIPPINE FOREIGN POLICY AND SECURITY

The first quarter of 2025 showed an upward trend in the Philippines' security engagements within the branches of the Armed Forces and with like-minded partners. This trend remains consistent with the policy direction of the Marcos Jr. administration, which places high priority for strategic collaboration.

This section covers the security engagements of the Philippines that seek to reinforce its external defense posture. It also presents the latest results of national surveys in relation to the West Philippine Sea.

Reinforcing the Philippines' Defense Capabilities

Defense Secretary Gilberto Teodoro Jr. alongside Armed Forces of the Philippines Chief of Staff Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. reiterated their commitment to remain steadfast in prioritizing territorial defense and ensuring security. This includes safeguarding the Philippines' sovereignty across all domains of operations including maritime, aerial, territorial, and cyberspace in accordance with the rule of law.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines is committed to independently performing its mandate to secure and protect the country through various means, such as internal and unilateral exercises among the branches of the military.

For instance, the Philippine Navy conducted its first unilateral gunnery exercise at the Bajo de Masinloc in March. Three vessels of the Philippine Fleet, including missile frigate BRP Jose Rizal, offshore patrol vessel Ramon Alcaraz, and landing dock BRP Tarlac, engaged in a series of live fire, maneuvering, and communication drills. Exercises such as these illustrate the Philippines' determination to capacitate its troops and improve operational readiness.

Working with Friends and Partners for a Secure Region

Apart from internal efforts, the Philippines continues to pursue a multilateral approach especially in defending the West Philippine Sea.

The Philippines engaged in several Multilateral Maritime Cooperative Activities (MMCA) in February. The first, with Australia, Japan, and the United States, featured a series of operational exercises to enhance interoperability. Specifically, the four countries engaged in communication check exercises, maritime domain awareness and contact reporting, and anti-submarine warfare exercises, among others.

In the same month, the country engaged with Canada and the United States for another MMCA. The naval and air units of the three countries engaged in communication check exercises, division tactics, photo exercise, and expandable mobile anti-submarine training target exercise.

The Philippines and France also engaged in a bilateral cooperative activity to enhance interoperability between its forces.

Conducted in accordance with the rule of law, these maritime cooperative activities underscore the shared commitment to a secure and stable region. It illustrates that upholding the freedom of navigation and the lawful uses of the sea and international airspace -- as prescribed by the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, Chicago Convention, and international law -- are shared principles held by responsible members of the international community.

In addition to these activities, the Philippines also saw an uptick in its participation in joint exercises with like-minded nations. The first of which is participation in La Pérouse, a military exercise led by France and participated in by other Indo-Pacific countries. Another key engagement is the joint bilateral patrol of the Philippine Air Force and the US Pacific Air Forces over the West Philippine Sea last February. The Philippines further participated in the Talisman Sabre Exercise with Australia and the United States, which started on March 29 and will culminate on April 5.

The Philippines also saw several port calls of foreign vessels in the first quarter. This includes French aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, Italian naval ship Antonio Marceglia, and Japanese multi-mission frigate JS Noshiro. These port calls reinforce the security cooperation of the Philippines with its friends. These also serve as projections of power, indicating the strategic presence and military readiness of like-minded nations to jointly respond to security challenges in the Indo-Pacific.

While these military engagements are ongoing, the Philippines welcomed numerous high-level government officials from allied countries. Among them are Japanese Foreign Minister Iwaya Takeshi, Japanese Defense Minister Gen Nakatani, Czech Republic Defense Minister Jana Černočová, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia Tanja Fajon, UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Affairs David Lammy MP, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. United States Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth also visited the Philippines in end-March.

These simultaneous engagements solidify the Philippines' strategic importance in the international community. They position the Philippines as a primary theater for a myriad of collaborations and place the country at the center of geopolitical activity.

Growing Support of Filipinos

Government efforts to bolster security capabilities and diversify security partnerships are supported by the Filipino people. In fact, the Stratbase-commissioned SWS survey conducted in February 2025 revealed that eight out of 10 Filipinos agree that the Philippine government must further strengthen its alliance with other countries through joint patrols, joint sails, and joint military exercises to assert and defend the Philippines' territorial and economic rights in the West Philippine Sea.

Contextualized by the persistent aggression perpetrated by China in the West Philippine Sea and its penetration into the various domains of Philippine society, the same survey revealed eight out of 10 Filipinos would vote for a candidate who believes that the Philippines must assert its rights against China's aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea.

The results of the surveys are clear: Safeguarding the West Philippine Sea and reinvigorating partnerships are a priority of Filipinos. These findings hence consolidate or reaffirm the January 2025 survey results by Pulse Asia on the growing negative sentiment toward pro-China candidates, reflecting a unified stance among Filipinos on national sovereignty and

Table 11

The Philippine government must further strengthen its alliance with other countries through joint patrols, joint sails, and joint military exercises to assert and defend the Philippines' territorial and economic rights in the West Philippine Sea

| | |
|-------------------|------------|
| Agree | 77% |
| Strongly agree | 59% |
| Somewhat agree | 18% |
| Undecided | 14% |
| Disagree | 9% |
| Somewhat disagree | 4% |
| Strongly disagree | 5% |

foreign policy. Altogether, these highlight the electorate’s preference for leaders who prioritize defending territorial and economic rights and standing firm against external pressures.

Table 12
One’s Choice is Between Candidates with Opposing Stances Toward the West Philippine Sea
(February 2025)

| | PH | NCR | BL | N Luz | C Luz | S Luz | Vis | Min |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|-------|-----|-----|
| A candidate who believes that the Philippines must assert our rights against China’s aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea | 78% | 87% | 83% | 77% | 85% | 85% | 82% | 75% |
| A candidate who does not believe that the Philippines must assert our rights against China’s aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea | 22% | 13% | 17% | 23% | 15% | 15% | 18% | 25% |



First Quarter 2025 Social Weather Report
2025 National Survey

The strategic direction of the Philippines’ foreign and security policies aligns with its national interests in the West Philippine Sea. The government’s national efforts coupled with multi-layered collaboration with like-minded nations paint a bright future not just for the Philippines but of the entire region. In today’s evolving geopolitical landscape, partnerships are essential not only in safeguarding sovereignty but also in building a future of shared growth, stability, and mutual respect among nations.

III. LEGISLATIVE DEVELOPMENTS AND UPDATE

On January 8, 2025, prior to the commencement of session, the President signed the Philippine Natural Gas Industry Development Act (Republic Act 12120). The bill is integral to harnessing the country’s natural resources to achieve energy security. Among its key features are the promotion of natural gas, development of the natural gas infrastructure, establishment of the liquefied natural gas trading hub, and the creation of an investment and regulatory framework.

When session commenced on January 13, 2025, and prior to its adjournment on February 7, 2025, Congress managed to act on several key priorities. Chief among these was the amendment to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA), specifically to extend the term of the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation for 50 more years. This bill was sent to the Office of the President on March 18 and is currently awaiting his approval. Finance Assistant Secretary Karlo Fermin Adriano has shared that this is but one of the Finance Department’s intended amendment to the EPIRA, as the department is employing a piecemeal approach to its amendment. Meanwhile, the E-Government Act, the Capital Markets Efficiency Promotions Act, Rationalization of the Mining Fiscal Regime, and the Amendments to the Universal Health Care Act were elevated to the Bicameral Conference Committee-level during the first quarter. These bills join the Blue Economy Act and the Amendments to the Foreign Investors’ Long-Term Lease Act in awaiting discussions in their respective conference committees.

Another key economic measure, the Accelerated and Reformed Right-of-Way (ARROW) Act, is at the period of individual amendments at the Senate, just a few steps before approval. Several other bills being interpellated at the Senate before the session break, including the New Government Auditing Code, Open Access in Data Transmission Act, and the Department of Water Resource Management Act, are in advance stages and may be approved when session commences on June 2, 2025. Other bills for interpellation at the Senate are the Mandatory Reserve Officers’ Training Corps (ROTC) Act and the Unified System of Separation, Retirement and Pension of Military and Uniformed Personnel Act.

Lagging with no progress in the first quarter are the Philippine Immigration Act, Excise Tax on Single-Use Plastics, Amendments to the Agrarian Reform Law, and the Waste-to-Energy Bill.

In summary, the status of the remaining Pres. Marcos Jr.'s priority legislation for the 19th Congress are as follows:

Priority Legislation 19th Congress

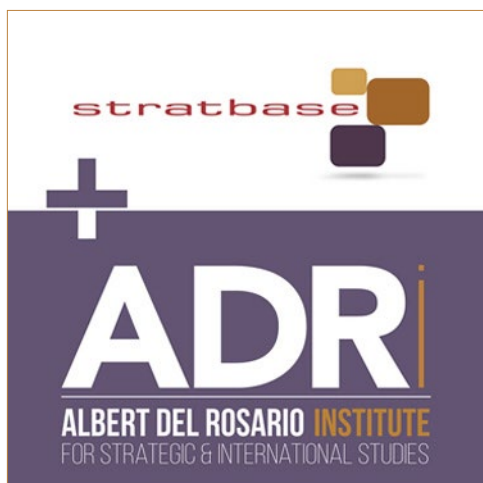
| LEGISLATIVE BILL | STATUS |
|--|--|
| Amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA) | Enrolled Copy sent to Malacañang |
| E-Governance Act | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Capital Markets Efficiency Promotion Act (CMEPA) | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Rationalization of the Mining Fiscal Regime | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Amendments to the Universal Healthcare Law | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Blue Economy Act | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Foreign Investors' Long-Term Lease Act | Awaiting Bicameral Conference Committee discussion |
| Accelerated and Reformed Right-of-Way (ARROW) Act | Period of individual amendments |
| Department of Water Resources | Undergoing interpellation at the Senate |
| Open Access in Data Transmission Act | Undergoing interpellation at the Senate |
| Mandatory Reserve Officers' Training Corps | Undergoing interpellation at the Senate |
| Unified System of Separation, Retirement and Pension of Military and Uniformed Personnel | Undergoing interpellation at the Senate |
| New Government Auditing Code | Undergoing interpellation at the Senate |
| Philippine Immigration Act | Assigned to the Technical Working Group |
| Excise Tax on Single-Use Plastics Blue Economy Act | Pending at the Committee-level |
| Waste-to-Energy Bill | Pending at the Committee-level |
| Amendments to the Agrarian Reform Law | Pending at the Committee-level |

The Third Regular Session under the 19th Congress resumed on January 13, 2025 and lasted until February 7, 2025. It adjourned on February 8, 2025 will remain adjourned until June 1, 2025. It will resume on June 2 and will last until June 13, 2025. Sine Die Adjournment will be from June 14 to July 27, 2025.



POLÍTICA

CRITICAL ISSUES OF PHILIPPINE POLITY



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