



**Press Statement**

**9 April 2026**

## **Defend Our Democracy Welcomes Historic Reform Ending Cadre Deployment**

Defend Our Democracy welcomes the signing into law of the Public Administration Management Amendment Act and the Public Service Amendment Act by President Cyril Ramaphosa. This landmark reform represents the most significant restructuring of South Africa's system of government in three decades.

For the first time since 1994, the authority to appoint senior officials and make operational decisions within government departments will rest with professional heads of departments, rather than political office bearers. This crucial separation of politics from administration ensures that Presidents, Ministers, Premiers, and Members of Executive Councils will no longer interfere in the appointment of public service staff.

Political interference in the day-to-day life of government departments has been one of the most persistent sources of administrative dysfunction, operational delays, and corruption in post-apartheid South Africa. By drawing a clear line between those who set policy and those who implement it, the Public Service Amendment Act creates the legal foundation for a genuinely capable, relatively autonomous public service — one that serves the Constitution and the public rather than the political interests of the moment.

This reform strikes at the heart of cadre deployment, a practice that has undermined the integrity, efficiency, and independence of the public service. By placing administrative authority firmly in the hands of qualified professionals, South Africa takes a decisive step toward building a capable, ethical, and accountable state.

South Africa has long had the rhetoric of a developmental state. It now has the architecture to begin building one. Defend Our Democracy hopes that all loopholes in the implementation phase will be identified and closed as early as possible, ensuring that this reform delivers on its promise of a professional, merit-based public service.

Defend Our Democracy believes this change will strengthen governance, restore public trust, and ensure that the public service serves the people of South Africa rather than political interests. We commend this bold move and call for its full and swift implementation to safeguard our democracy and advance the values of transparency, fairness, and meritocracy.

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