

[AS INTRODUCED IN THE SENATE]

A

BILL

to provide for the right to information in a rapid and low-cost manner, subject only to reasonable restrictions established by law

WHEREAS Government transparency and the right to information ensure that the people of Pakistan have improved access to records held by public authorities and promote the purposes of making the Government more accountable to its people, of improving participation by the people in public affairs, of reducing corruption and inefficiency in Government, of promoting sound economic growth and of promoting good governance and respect for human rights;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient to provide for a law which gives effect to the human right to information, as guaranteed under international law and by Article 19A of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, whereby everyone shall have the right to have access to all information held by public bodies subject only to reasonable restrictions as established by law, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto;

It is hereby enacted as follows:-

1. Short title, application and commencement.- (1) This Act may be called the Right to Information Act, 2016.

(2) It shall apply to public bodies as defined in clause (ix) of section 2 of this Act.

(3) It shall come into force at once.

2. Definitions.- In this Act, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context-

(i) "applicant" means any natural or legal person who lodges a request, or any person who is acting for or on behalf of such a person;

(ii) "Commission" or "Information Commission" means the Pakistan Information Commission established in accordance with section 29;

(iii) "complaint" means any grievance lodged in writing by an applicant with the principal officer of a public body in accordance with section 28;

(iv) "designated official" means an official of a public body designated in accordance with section 7;

(v) "information" means material held in any record, regardless of who produced it or its physical form or characteristics.

(vi) "prescribed" means prescribed by rules made under this Act;

(vii) "national security" means and includes the matters pertaining to the integrity, security or defence of Pakistan or any part thereof;

(viii) "principal officer" means-