

Strategies and Challenges in Preventing Money Politics in the 2024 Legislative Elections

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Abstract. *This study aims to examine and analyze the strategies employed and the challenges faced by the election supervisory body in preventing money politics during the 2024 legislative elections. Utilizing an empirical legal research method, this study combines statutory, case, and conceptual approaches by conducting field observations, interviews, and document studies to analyze fundamental gaps between normative legal requirements and the practical implementation realities. The novelty of this study lies in its specific examination of how supervisory bodies have changed and adapted their responses to newly emerging forms of money politics, such as digital currency transfers, the distribution of discount vouchers, and disguised social assistance, accompanied by a quantitative assessment of resource disparities where a single district-level supervisory team may oversee an average of seventy polling stations. Based on this analysis, it is concluded that although the supervisory bodies have strong legal authority and have successfully integrated technologies such as the Siwaslu system for real-time monitoring and social media monitoring, their overall effectiveness is severely limited by structural constraints on human resources and the continuing evolution of money politics tactics. Furthermore, low public awareness regarding the legal implications of vote-buying continues to pose an obstacle to prevention efforts. Consequently, this study recommends strengthening the regulatory framework to impose stricter and more deterrent sanctions, increasing public participation through targeted youth engagement, and adopting risk-based monitoring strategies to maximize limited resources in historically vulnerable areas.*

Keywords: Elections; Money Politics; Supervision.

1. Introduction

As a country that adheres to a constitutional democratic system, Indonesia has enshrined this status in the 1945 Constitution which affirms that the concept of supreme sovereignty rests with the people and that there is a separation of powers as regulators of the nation and state, namely legislative, executive, and judicial to ensure a balance of power within the government. To reflect this, Indonesia implements a system in the form of general elections (Pemilu) which serves as one of the pillars of a democratic state, providing a direct forum for citizens to participate directly in choosing their leaders and the result is that the electoral process transforms citizens from passive subjects into the highest authority in government, reflecting the true will of the people. The integrity of this mechanism is not merely procedural in nature but instead, it is also an important indicator used to assess the overall health and value of democracy within the country, making fairness in every election cycle crucial to the nation's stability.

In alignment with these democratic principles, Article 22E paragraph (2) of the Indonesia's 1945 Constitution explicitly requires that general elections be held to elect members of the House of Representatives, the Regional Representative Council, the President and Vice President, as well as the Regional House of Representatives Councils. This clause ensures that the Legislative Branch, as one of the main branches of government, receives its legitimacy directly from the people. This is further regulated in Article 22E, paragraph 5, which states that general elections must be conducted by a national, permanent, and independent election commission to ensure that the elections are conducted fairly, transparently, and without manipulation or pressure from other parties. Consequently, Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections was introduced and ratified to implement these constitutional directives, establishing a robust legal framework that governs the mechanisms, timelines, and institutional structures necessary to ensure the integrity of the electoral process as a reflection of the people's sovereignty.

As part of its duties, the General Elections Commission (KPU) is responsible for organizing general elections; however, according to the constitutional provisions on independence and impartiality, a special oversight body is required to ensure legal certainty. Historically, this role was carried out on a temporary basis, but legal reforms changed this by establishing the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) as a permanent institution authorized to oversee all stages of the election process. Under Article 93 of Law Number 7 of 2017, the General Election Supervisory Agency has been explicitly mandated to prevent money politics and, at the same time, it operates hierarchically from the national level down to the sub-district and village levels, resulting in a mechanism that ensures thorough monitoring of legal compliance and allows for prevention before any violations

occur, The most widespread and persistent problem among the various election violations that have taken place remains money politics. Money politics refers to the practice of influencing voter behavior through material rewards whether in the form of cash, gifts, services, or other benefits with the aim of securing votes in an election

Originally, money politics was practiced with the aim of directly buying votes in the days prior to the election, a practice known as the “dawn raid.” And over time, this practice has evolved with technological advancements, becoming more sophisticated and complex including the use of discount vouchers for shopping, topping up digital wallets, cryptocurrency transfers, and even social assistance disguised as humanitarian aid. This practice has altered the essence of democracy itself, as voters no longer choose based on their own beliefs, but rather on the benefits they receive. This phenomenon has damaged public trust in the electoral system and undermined the legitimacy of elected representatives if left unchecked.

Although the General Election Supervisory Agency does have strong legal authority to prevent money politics, there remains a gap between legal provisions and their implementation on the ground, where prevention efforts continue to be challenged by the evolving tactics such as new ways of bribery by utilizing digital currency, and structural limitations where election candidates attempts to exploit legal loopholes for political gain remain difficult to detect and proved under the existing legal constraints and provisions, combined with an imbalance in resources which results in a difficult situation to achieve effective and ideal oversight conditions.

The 2024 Legislative Elections present a unique opportunity to examine these dynamics; technological advancements and social changes have created new challenges in conducting supervisory activities; the use of digital assets and social media has opened new legal loopholes and introduced new challenges in supervising money politics. Therefore, understanding how election oversight addresses these issues is crucial for formulating appropriate and effective strategies to prevent money politics

This study aimed to analyze the strategies and challenges faced by the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) in the 2024 legislative elections, specifically to examine how it adapted to new forms of vote-buying and to evaluate the impact of resource limitations on the effectiveness of oversight. The study employed an empirical legal research method that combined legal analysis with field observations, interviews, and document analysis, to bridge the gap between normative requirements and their implementation in the field in order to provide recommendations that can strengthen the regulatory framework to achieve fairer and more credible elections

2. Research Methods

This study employs an empirical legal research method (empirical jurisprudence) grounded in the theory of legal realism, which views law not merely as written rules but as a social phenomenon arising from human behavior in the process of its implementation. This theory was chosen to analyze the gap between the requirements of Law No. 7 of 2017 and the actual implementation of election supervision in the field. Data collection was conducted through field research and document analysis, with primary data gathered through interviews with members of the city-level General Election Supervisory Agency, and secondary data obtained through a review of relevant regulations, election-related reports, and official documents from the General Election Commission and General Election Supervisory Agency

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Theoretical Framework on Elections

General elections or elections in general are a form of democracy that forms a system of power born from the will of the people so that it forms a government that is born from the realization of the goals desired by the people through a representative deliberation system, the purpose of the election itself is to form a government that obtains strong support from the people so that it can carry out the functions of government power in achieving national goals. Theoretically, the function of elections is as an implementation of the sovereignty of the people where the people are the highest rulers who are directly involved in determining their representatives in government. In the Indonesian legal system, this is specifically regulated in the 1945 Constitution in Article 22E which regulates how elections are carried out, when elections are held, who will be elected in the elections, and other mechanisms contained in the form of laws, namely in Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning general elections

3.2. Theoretical Framework on Money Politics

Money politics (or political money) in a country will often be heard when a country will hold a general election, and this is also the case in Indonesia, where discussions about money politics tend to become more common among academics and the general public as general elections come around, The definition of money politics itself still has several definitions such as specifically a strategy of buying and selling votes (vote buying) carried out close to the election time which is then known as dawn attack (dawn attack), or in general as a long-term political strategy by using structured policies for the benefit of the election, explained as an effort to influence the behavior of others with certain rewards, and in the legal concept it has the meaning as an effort to change the behavior of voters using

material rewards to gain support in the form of vote support. As for those who interpret money politics as part of a corruption because there is an activity of bribing the people during the general election process and can be said to be a form of political corruption because there are conditions where the chosen winner will tend to prioritize personal interests to be able to return the capital spent during the campaign

3.3. Bawaslu's Position in Preventing Money Politics

Bawaslu's position in preventing money politics plays an important role in ensuring certainty and justice, normatively Bawaslu's position is stated in Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, in article 1 paragraph 17 defines Bawaslu as an election organizing institution that oversees the implementation of general elections in Indonesia, this is then further explained in the same law in article 93 letter b which confirms Bawaslu's authority to be able to prevent election violations, money politics is not explicitly listed as an election violation but the definition of money politics fulfills one form of prohibition in the campaign in article 280 paragraph 1 letter J which prohibits promising or giving money or other materials to election campaign participants, On the other hand, Structurally, Bawaslu is a hierarchical institution where in carrying out its duties and functions it will depend heavily on direction from top to bottom, this is to ensure that there is the same coordination at every level related to the challenges faced.

Bawaslu of South Tangerang City as a city level Bawaslu where in carrying out its duties and functions can only receive direction from the Bawaslu above it, namely Bawaslu RI or the central Bawaslu, and Bawaslu at the provincial level, namely Bawaslu Banten, Based on KPU Regulation Number 6 of 2023, in the 2024 legislative elections Bawaslu of South Tangerang City can only receive direction from Bawaslu RI or the National level Bawaslu is the highest Bawaslu in the hierarchy, who has the authority to carry out supervision in all electoral districts in Indonesia, And Bawaslu Banten as the provincial level Bawaslu who has supervisory authority in all electoral districts in Banten province, specifically the Banten 3 electoral district which includes Tangerang, Tangerang City and South Tangerang City.

In line with this, the city-level Bawaslu in its function then has the authority to provide direction to the supervisory institution below it, namely the Election Supervisory Committee or Panwaslu, a supervisory institution formed by Bawaslu, Panwaslu as an institution formed by Bawaslu also has a hierarchy to divide the area of authority based on level where as Panwaslu at the sub-district level, with 7 Panwaslu groups according to the number of districts in South Tangerang City and Panwaslu at the sub-district/village level with a total of 54 Panwaslu Groups according to the number of sub-districts/villages in South Tangerang City

With this clear hierarchical system, Bawaslu Kota Selatan structurally has a strategic position where it already has a clear center to be able to coordinate well at the National, Provincial, and equivalent levels with Bawaslu Tangerang, Bawaslu Kota Tangerang, and in implementing its supervisory duties it can also reach the Sub-district and Village/Sub-district levels with the Panwaslu as an extension of Bawaslu Kota Selatan.

3.4. Bawaslu's Strategy in Preventing Money Politics

With the coordination between levels and reports coming in from various regions regarding reports of violations that occurred and the factors that caused them, Bawaslu has gradually adapted to the changing times and utilized technology to be able to stop money politics. Some of the strategies implemented are the implementation of Technical Guidance (BIMTEK) as one of the programs implemented to provide training and shared understanding regarding the strategies to be implemented, in addition, BIMTEK also serves as a forum for Bawaslu to supervise elections, manage state-owned administration and assets, adapt and utilize technology, and as part of public information disclosure with monitoring and evaluation to increase transparency and accountability to prevent loopholes for money politics violations.

The adaptation and utilization of technology carried out by Bawaslu is realized by the Election Supervision System (Siwaslu) which is a digital application owned by Bawaslu to monitor all stages of the election directly in real-time and neatly documented so that the public can also monitor the development of the election starting from the sub-district/village level to the central level, the Election Supervision System application can also be used to report potential violations of money politics that occur from before the election begins until when the election is underway, Another strategy carried out by Bawaslu in preventing money politics is to monitor social media, specifically the official accounts of parties and election participants who will advance as candidates to find any invitations or actions that according to Bawaslu will end up as money politics

The strategy carried out by Bawaslu is not only digital or through technology but Bawaslu also carries out physical supervision, in this case together with Panwaslu, The member of Bawaslu South Tangerang City also carries out monitoring and patrols for anti-money politics supervision, especially during the campaign period and places prone to violations, by visiting sub-districts, villages to every polling stations in the Banten III electoral district of South Tangerang City to obtain information and see directly how the real situation occurs in the field so that it can be compared with existing data, this is also one of the strategies to see how an adaptive approach can be carried out by seeing what is more likely to happen in the field instead of just relying on numbers in recorded cases, In addition to this,

Bawaslu also carries out prevention by issuing appeals to the public regarding money politics, holding coordination meetings with Panwaslu and the public, and conducting socialization so that information can be conveyed in full and get direct input from people in the field.

3.5. Challenges for Bawaslu in Preventing Money Politics

The Indonesia General Election Supervisory Agency has several obstacles in preventing money politics such as in conducting socialization with election participants where ideally it will be attended by the general chairman of each party that will nominate election candidates with the aim of inform any changes in rules or other technical matters that need to be followed and understood by the participants who will advance, however in reality often the socialization conducted by Bawaslu is not attended by the general chairman of the party but their representatives such as the general secretary of the party or other delegates sent by the party, this then has an impact on the quality and speed of information dissemination where what is conveyed in the socialization is not fully conveyed to the participants who will take part in the election and ends with violations committed by participants because they do not know how the technical and legal regulations related to what things can or cannot be done both during the campaign period and on election day.

Meanwhile from the public side, there are several challenges faced by the General Election Supervisory Agency in carrying out prevention, Firstly, there is a tendency for the public not to get involved in matters related to politics outside of election activities such as participating in socialization carried out by Bawaslu, There are still habits in society that consider money politics to be a normal thing that occurs as a form of democratic celebration so that the socialization carried out by Bawaslu is only a formality for those who are interested, this makes the socialization carried out by Bawaslu not yet fully effective because it only reaches a small part of the community.

Despite facing difficulties in reaching the public, over time Bawaslu has made several innovations such as socialization carried out not only offline or physically but also online through social media, and focusing on involving young generation from each electoral district to be able to participate in socialization with the hope they will able to serve as Bawaslu representatives who not only have an understanding of legal developments and technical matters, but can also actively participate in raising awareness about these issues within their immediate circles, such as their neighbors and family members.

Another challenge faced by the South Tangerang City Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) is a structural challenge in the form of the ratio of supervisory workload to the availability of human resources. Based on data from the Permanent Voter

List (DPT) for the 2024 Election in Minutes Number 198/PK.01-BA/3674/2023 dated June 21, 2023, it shows that there are 1,022,237 voters spread across 3,824 Polling Stations (TPS) throughout the South Tangerang area, as seen in Table 1, which shows variations in the Polling stations ratio per sub-district in each district.

Table 1. Distribution of Voters, Polling Stations, and Supervision Ratio per Sub-district in South Tangerang City (2024 Voter List)

District	Sub-district	Number of Voters	Number of polling stations	Polling stations ratio per sub-district
Pamulang	8	237,236	900	± 1 : 112
Pondok Aren	11	216,647	805	± 1 : 73
Ciputat	7	159,355	621	± 1 : 88
East Ciputat	6	125,323	456	± 1 : 76
Serpong	9	118,602	434	± 1 : 48
North Serpong	7	100,202	370	± 1 : 52
Setu	6	64,872	238	± 1 : 39
Total	54	1,022,237	3824	± 1 : 70

The data in Table 1 shows a significant difference in workload, Pamulang and Ciputat Districts have the heaviest ratio with 112 and 88 polling stations per sub-district respectively, while Setu District has the lightest ratio with only 39 polling stations per sub-district, this condition gives an average of 70 polling stations for each sub-district level Panwaslu. Normatively, based on the Regulation of the General Election Supervisory Agency of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2022 in Article 66, it provides standards for each polling station to be supervised by a polling station supervisor formed by the District level Panwaslu to prevent election violations, but realistically this cannot be done ideally due to limited human resources to supervise all polling stations at the district level, districts with a larger number of polling stations such as Pamulang and Ciputat have a greater workload than Districts in other areas and this condition has the potential to make supervision and coordination more difficult because the number of officers involved is greater even with the same standards,

This limitation then makes Bawaslu able to implement a risk-based supervision strategy as an adaptive solution where Bawaslu focuses more physical supervision presence on vulnerable locations such as locations that have a history of violations. Locations with densely populated areas, or locations with high public reports, allow Bawaslu to maximize the effectiveness of detecting violations at vulnerable polling stations while ensuring the role of polling station supervisors in each location continues to run according to the mandate

Socialization related to violations also has challenges where there are differences in understanding between the community and Bawaslu which give rise to disharmony in preventing money politics, for example in cases where election participants provide social assistance to the community for humanitarian purposes, but in practice Bawaslu finds indications that the assistance provided is aimed at influencing voters in determining their choice, this incident is a challenge for Bawaslu because from the community side perspective the assistance provided is something that is useful and gives hope that if the election participant who provides assistance wins, then in the future there will be hope that other positive things that are beneficial to the community will exist, but this is a concern because it has the potential to change the essence of the election, namely choosing according to one's own wishes to become choosing based on the benefits obtained.

Another interesting phenomenon that occurs in the field is that in line with technological developments, money politics is no longer carried out in the form of money as regulated in Law No. 7 of 2011 concerning Currency, namely in the form of Rupiah, but several cases have been found such as giving in the form of coupons for shopping (discount vouchers), giving digital currency balances to digital wallets (Top up E-money to E-wallet), giving non-goods such as certain services, using funds to build public infrastructure, all the way to the use of cryptocurrency which is carried out to gain support from voters or other election participants.

Responding to this phenomenon, in article 523 paragraph 1 of the Election Law implicitly expands the meaning of money politics not only limited to money but also includes "other materials as compensation to Election Campaign participants directly or indirectly" which provides room for Bawaslu to be able to interpret that the prevention carried out is not only against the provision of money, but other rewards which according to Bawaslu are used as a form of gaining support.

However, from a legal perspective this has challenges in the form of difficulties in legal proof because Bawaslu needs to collect sufficient evidence to convince that the existing findings are an incident of money politics, In addition to the complex reporting mechanisms that require various procedural steps to charge those involved in money politics, it is also necessary to consider the limitations of the sanctions that can be imposed, specifically that sanctions are only enforceable and can only be imposed on the giver, while the recipient in this context, cannot be considered a perpetrator or an involved party. This situation complicates the handling of cases and limits the ability to uncover the root causes of the problem when cases of money politics are exposed. This results in sanctions that are not sufficiently effective and do not serve as a deterrent to prevent future election candidates from engaging in money politics.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that although the General Election Supervisory Agency, particularly at the South Tangerang city level, possesses a strong legal foundation and effectively implemented strategies that combined technology with in-person supervision during the 2024 legislative elections, its overall effectiveness remains constrained by resource disparities, the emergence of sophisticated non-cash money politics tactics, and low public awareness, as well as a mismatch between the number of voters and the available supervisors, coupled with the difficulty of legally proving findings of violations involving digital currency and shopping vouchers thereby limiting the Agency's ability to prevent money politics. To address this gap, it is essential to strengthen the legal framework to impose severe sanctions on all parties involved, implementing risk-based strategies to optimize oversight in areas that are prone to violations, and expand public awareness programs by actively engaging the younger generation to foster genuine integrity in elections, which is more than just a mere formality

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Interview with Mr. Ahmad Syarif Hidayatullah, Staff of the Violation Handling Division of the South Tangerang City Election Supervisory Agency, November 25, 2025.

Interview with Mr. Antonius Didik Trihatmoko, Member of the Election Supervisory Agency of South Tangerang City, November 25, 2025.