

Review of The Implementation of Democracy and Legitimacy of Regional Head Officials in Indonesia

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Abstract. In Indonesia, the principle of a state based on law serves as the cornerstone. As an entity, Indonesia also embodies a power structure with democratic principles that encompass the realms of politics and governance. However, as a state based on law, power must have legitimacy embedded within the constitutional framework, thereby constraining governmental authority through legal rules. Recent developments in local governance have drawn public attention, particularly regarding controversies surrounding the appointment of acting regional heads. Yet, this issue transcends mere democratic essence and the principle of a state based on law. This research explores aspects of democratic implementation that encompass legal truth and justice, aiming to understand the issues highlighted by the public concerning the appointment of acting regional heads. Through a socio-legal approach, this empirical research presents the reality of conditions in the regions, shedding light on various questions from the public regarding the appointment of acting regional heads by the central government. It is the dynamic evolution of democracy revealed in this research's findings.

Keywords: Democracy in Regions, Legal Certainty, Regional Head Officials

1 Introduction

Democracy believes that general elections (elections) play a very important role in determining the future of the nation.[1] The conduct of elections is crucial for democratic countries like Indonesia. Besides being a form of implementing constitutional mandates, elections are also crucial for the future sustainability of a nation. The democratic festivities at the regional head election level will be conducted concurrently with the deputy regional heads. These regional head elections are purposed to produce profiles of legitimate regional heads. To welcome these democratic festivities, preparations have been underway since May 2022 for the appointment of regional officials for 5 governors, 37 regents, and 6 mayors. Therefore, the government (Ministry of Home Affairs) and the People's Representative Council (DPR) have committed not to amend existing legal instruments (legislation) governing the operationalization of regional elections. It indicates that Law No. 1 of 2015 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors will serve as the juridical basis for the implementation of regional elections throughout Indonesia.[1]

Those appointed as acting regional heads in 2022 are for 101 regions and in 2023 for 171 Regions. Thus, the total number of acting regional heads that must be appointed by the government until 2024 is 272. This is equivalent to half the total number of provinces, regencies,

and cities in Indonesia. Another consequence is the formation of laws regulating several schedules towards the national implementation of regional elections. Through Article 201 of Law No. 10 of 2016, it was decided to cancel the holding of regional elections for areas that were supposed to conduct elections in 2022 and 2023.

As a result of the postponement, there is undoubtedly a vacancy or void in governmental activities to provide services to the public that began on May 15, 2022. The provinces where the terms of office of regional heads end are: Bangka Belitung Islands, Banten, West Sulawesi, Gorontalo, and West Papua. Additionally, on May 22, 2022, the terms of office of 37 regents and 6 mayors will also end.

Referring to the mechanism regarding the procedures for appointing acting regional heads, Article 86 of Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government has affirmed: "The President appoints the acting Governor upon the proposal of the Minister of Home Affairs and the Minister of Home Affairs appoints the acting Regent or Mayor upon the proposal of the Governor." [2] Therefore, the determination or appointment of who will be appointed holds significant and strategic meaning for various political forces at the national level. For political parties, regional elections are not just arenas of democratic competition but also moments to gain political prestige.

Explicitly, the Regional Government Law does emphasize the need for further regulation regarding these acting officials in government regulations. However, it must be acknowledged that until now, to the best of the author's knowledge, there has been no specific government regulation as a derivative of the Regional Government Law that regulates in more detail the requirements and terms of office of acting Governors and Regents or Mayors. At this point, it certainly becomes a legal issue and problem regarding its legality. One worrying aspect is the large number and length of the terms of office for acting regional heads, which raises doubts, especially regarding neutrality in the 2024 elections. [2] Therefore, many demand that appointments be made democratically, transparently, and accountably.

That can be seen when the Ministry of Home Affairs prepares technical regulations for the selection of acting regional heads. The implementing regulation for the appointment of acting officials is targeted to be implemented starting from July 2022. Certainly, these technical regulations are highly needed so that the appointed officials have the capacity and quality required to lead the region. Moreover, the challenges they will face will be much heavier. Unlike the challenges they usually face when they are bureaucrats.

Emphasizing that point, it is necessary to understand or realize that the dimension of the central-regional relationship in a nation-state involves complex aspects. These complex aspects often make many parties feel frustrated, skeptical, and frustrated when they view the central-regional relationship blindly according to the wishes of the center, which holds national elite status.

The implications of all this give rise to the view from the regions that the center is becoming increasingly powerful regarding what the regions must do for the interests of their people because they are more aware of the realities of people's lives in the region, is a fact that cannot be ignored by all of us for the progress of Indonesia. However, regional progress automatically brings national progress (Indonesia). That is why the founding fathers of the nation, especially Bung Hatta, clearly rejected direct regional elections as soon as they were established in Law No. 1 of 1957, based on the idea that direct regional elections could tear Indonesia apart. Now it is evident, that prolonged conflicts occur due to direct regional elections, not to mention the

added data on corruption of regional heads due to the costs of regional head elections and the election of corrupt leaders due to the ambitious and greedy behavior driven by elections full of ambition and greed.

As is known, the founding fathers continued to allow elections at the grassroots level or the lowest level of government (village). Village autonomy is the autonomy that has existed since the village was formed. Village autonomy is based on custom, covers the physical and spiritual life of the village population, and does not come from government grants.[3] So, villages in Indonesia should be asymmetrical with every inch of Indonesian territory because they are allowed to grow naturally according to each local character, including in terms of selecting the village head. That basic assumption, so the basic character that makes regional autonomy authoritative and dignified is that the autonomous regional bureaucracy is not an extension, let alone subordinate to the central bureaucracy.

Thus, autonomous regions must be independent and able to understand current national policies. The central government must encourage regional potential, especially human resources because, if the autonomous region is weak, it will certainly impact upholding dignified regional autonomy. Along with the basic character or character mentioned above, the central hand can be present in the regions through vertical agencies by the division of affairs that has been developed and should remain there because national interests will undoubtedly arise in the regions. In my opinion, it is not haram for central people to have offices in regions that can produce dignified, elegant center-region cooperation. In this context, it is necessary to frame assistance tasks or collaborative governance appropriately.

Finally, this basic character must be inherent and ingrained in every regional government official stakeholder who will later be appointed to oversee the democratic election process in the region, whether in regional elections, legislative elections, or presidential elections. So, once again, it is time for improvements in the future ahead of the 2024 political year so that the accelerated implementation of democracy in Indonesia shows a trend of improving quality. Not the other way around experiencing setbacks.

2 Method

The research method used is field research employing a socio-legal approach, as this involves a literature study (legislation) or law conceptualized as rules or norms that serve as benchmarks for human behavior. Both sociologically and empirically, this is based on the applicable laws and regulations, as well as those related to the main research issues.[4]

3 Result and Discussion

3.1 Several Legal Issues

It cannot be denied that several issues may arise in the context of this discourse. First, the tenure of acting regional heads, which is considered quite long, exceeds half of the term of office of regional heads elected directly by the people. This extended tenure significantly impacts the level of accountability and acceptability of the acting officials' performance among

the public, which can have either positive or negative effects that correlate with the public's perception.

Second, there are issues concerning the quality of democracy, related to the acceptability of acting regional heads in the eyes of legislators (members of the Regional House of Representatives or DPRD), who question the fact that these officials are not locals. The "stigmatization" that they do not understand the regional characteristics is reasonable, leading to public suspicion that the acting officials are merely "placements" by the central government.

Third, we cannot ignore or turn a blind eye to the resistance from the DPRD against acting regional heads who are perceived to have failed in administering the regional government. This resistance can lead to "sparkling" conflicts and tensions between the legislative and executive branches in the region, causing development budgets to "stall" at the DPRD approval stage. One can imagine if the development budget is halted for two years.

Fourth, there is politically "scented" suspicion about how to maintain the independence of the acting regional heads from potential political intervention and co-optation, which are considered quite vulnerable to occur. This is evident now, where intense political lobbying is carried out for the position of acting officials, involving several politicians and political parties.

Observing the complexity and turmoil of these conditions, Professor Djohermansyah Djohan of the Institute of Public Administration (IPDN) opines that the Regional House of Representatives, as the representation of regional communities, should be involved in the appointment of acting officials. This is important to maintain a conducive situation during the political contest.

The DPRD (Regional House of Representatives) can be given a role in providing suggestions and input before the governor submits three names of candidates for acting regents or mayors to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Similarly, for the three candidates for acting governor, the DPRD should be asked for suggestions and input before the Minister of Home Affairs proposes them to the president. Alongside this, the names of the three candidates for acting positions should also be made public. This way, the public can participate by providing suggestions and input to the governor, the Minister of Home Affairs, and the DPRD. The considerations from the public and the DPRD should be included as notes in the submission of acting official proposals to the Ministry of Home Affairs or the president.

Involving the DPRD is also important given that the selected acting officials will need to work with the DPRD, including in the formation of regional regulations and the approval of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. If the relationship between the acting officials and the DPRD is poor, it is feared that the functioning of the government will be disrupted. Moreover, public involvement is equally important. The public can remind the governor or DPRD members if the proposed acting officials have poor track records. This is part of public control or participation in determining acting officials in their regions.

Additionally, another legal issue is the recurrence of an unresolved problem, namely the placement of active TNI (Indonesian National Armed Forces) members in civilian positions contrary to Law No. 34/2004 on the TNI (TNI Law), as noted in the performance review of TNI Reform compiled by the Setara Institute in recent years. This includes the placement of active TNI members as commissioners in several state-owned enterprises (BUMN).

Therefore, the appointment of active TNI members as Acting Regent of West Seram Regency explicitly contradicts Law No. 34/2004 on the TNI (TNI Law). It must be understood

that the position of acting regional head is not among the civilian positions exempted as stipulated in Article 47, paragraph (2) of the TNI Law. Hence, the applicable provision should be Article 47, paragraph (1), which states that TNI soldiers must first resign or retire from active military service to occupy the position of acting regional head. This provision was also reaffirmed in the Constitutional Court Decision No. 15/PUU-xx/2022. Therefore, it must be emphasized that the opinion stating that active TNI-Polri members can hold the position of acting regional head as long as they have been given a high leadership position is incorrect.

The Constitutional Court Decision No. 15/PUU-xx/2022 clearly states that high leadership positions that can be filled by TNI soldiers and Polri members must be filled after they resign from active service if needed and by competencies established through an open and competitive process. Thus, before occupying the position of acting regional head, active TNI-Polri members must first resign from active service to fill high leadership positions. This is the provision or rule of law that must be followed, serving as a reference framework and fundamental basis in decision-making.

3.2 Challenges, Consolidation, dan Collaboration

Two and a half years carrying out his duties as "acting" is certainly not a short time. Likewise, the challenges of duties, functions, and authority are certainly not simple and the burden of responsibility is light. The problem is, it is not as simple as appointing state civil servants (ASN) to become acting governors, acting regents, or acting mayors. In principle, the reality of filling in this position is present amid the direct election scheme that applies in Indonesia as the implementation of Article 18 Paragraph (4) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia which states that the Governor, Regent, and Mayor are each the head of the regional government. Provinces, districts, and cities are elected democratically.

Underlining the word democratic, in practice it becomes a challenge when an extraordinary belief emerges among society that what determines (competition) the candidate's election (candidate) is the ownership of capital (money). Apart from that, another challenge is the potential to take advantage of the bureaucracy which has been the home base for civil servants.

That basic assumption, that the solution effort as a way out to achieve quality democracy is bureaucratic neutrality which is the main pillar that is quite important in improving public services to the maximum without distinguishing between interests and political affiliations. This attitude and commitment must be inherent in an acting regional head. So, in a democratic political system, the bureaucracy positions itself as a professional and neutral institution or neutralization. Bureaucratic neutrality means placing the bureaucracy's position in its proper area, namely as a state tool carrying out state duties.[5]

Thus, things that are inhibiting factors must be made into challenges to find the best solution, so that the process of determining 271 acting regional heads in 2022 and 2023 truly has strong legality. Therefore, it is necessary to make a legal breakthrough in the PP regarding the authority and implementation of duties for acting regional heads. In this context, the President as the holder of government power according to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 4 Paragraph 1 can make discretion and grant delegations to the officials concerned. This delegation is necessary and by Law No. 30/2014 concerning Government

Administration. Once again, the process of appointing acting regional heads from the start must be transparent with clear terms and procedures.

So, to prevent conflict in the region. Executive Director of the Regional Autonomy Monitoring and Implementation Committee (KP-POD) Herman N Suparman reminded the importance of officials establishing good relations with all stakeholders in the region. Consolidation is carried out both internally in government, namely regional work units (SKPD), and externally with regional leadership coordination forums (forkopimda).

Indeed, it must be acknowledged that consolidation and collaboration are crucial in leading a region amidst challenges that are not easy. Moreover, the acting regional head is not the result of direct election by the people, but rather an assignment. Therefore, we must still pay attention to developing and prioritizing the foundations of democracy in national, state, and social life.

Because policies often emerge, sometimes the government and DPR are too busy defending themselves for the policies or policy discourse they carry out on the pretext that their aims are good, relevant, or based on needs. Their actions were not by existing laws and regulations. More than that, the official seems to have forgotten the origin of why legislation contains prohibitive or restrictive provisions.

As a result, to welcome a more advanced Indonesia, one of the timeless agendas that must be prepared is to manage the decentralized government well in the future. However, law-abiding government management is a manifestation of Pancasila practice at the local level in the community has the right to be involved in government administration. For this reason, as part of our nation, we hope that the 2024 elections can be held well, as an embodiment of democratic principles which are one of the pillars of national and state life.

3.3 Caretaker Controversy

Disagreements, aka controversy over the appointment of acting regional heads, are still ongoing. What's going on with the recent appointment of caretakers or acting regional heads? Why is it noisy, excited, and questioned by the public? In fact, so far the appointment of PJ governors, PJ regents, and PJ mayors from civil servants can be said to be safe.

The starting point of the problem is that elections will be held simultaneously, namely regional head elections (pilkada) nationally in 541 regions in 2024 in accordance with the Regional Election Law No. 16 of 2010. As a result of the law that emerged, the model of by-term or wave regional elections in 2022 in 101 regions, in 2023 in 170 regions, and in 2025 in 270 regions which are actually good, as regulated in the Regional Election Law No. 8 of 2015 will be eliminated. If the simultaneous elections are to run well, further adjustments need to be made to the electoral system to produce better election quality and avoid worse election conditions such as in the 2009 and 2014 elections.[6]

The basis of opinion from the government, starting from the simultaneous national regional elections, will be to synchronize local development planning with national development planning. This is because the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) of the elected president for 2025-2030 will coincide with the Regional Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMD) of elected regional heads for 2025-2030 in all regions in Indonesia.

The regional elections which were held simultaneously encouraged the people to elect regional heads and deputy regional heads democratically.[7]

This argumentative building is considered weak. In practice, the RPJMD is often not connected to the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) and Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), let alone the RPJMN. In conclusion, the reality is different plans, different budgeting, and different implementation. So, the implication of the ambitious project to unify regional elections nationally, which was designed hastily, without measured and careful simulations, is that the positions of regional heads of 271 regions in Indonesia are vacant. In accordance with the principle "there should be no vacuum of government power", 271 regional heads were appointed from structural officials in the state civil apparatus (24 governors, 191 regents, and 56 mayors). Assuming that the population of Indonesia in the 24 provinces that will be governed by these civil servants is certainly not small, very large, no less than 240 million people or the equivalent of 89 percent.

From a time perspective, they also lead the region for a very long period, spanning years, with some regions reaching nearly three years. They obtained these positions without contest (by appointment). According to the Constitutional Court's decision, the term of one period is two and a half years plus one day. It means some acting regional heads serve a term that falls into the category of one full period. Previously, acting regional heads typically served for only a few months.

However, what makes the public anxious is that these acting regional heads, who are civil servants, will lead the government during the presidential and legislative elections on February 14, 2024, and the simultaneous national regional elections on November 27, 2024. The situation has already become a public opinion (common knowledge) that civil servants are starting to be politicized by those in power, who are interested in ensuring that their preferred party or presidential or regional head candidates win the elections. At this point, it must be acknowledged that this is very vulnerable and can potentially undermine the integrity of Indonesia's elections.

Another equally significant issue is that the new president, inaugurated on October 20, 2024, must oversee the execution of the simultaneous national regional elections on November 27, 2024, ensuring they are safe, peaceful, honest, and fair. This occurs just five weeks into their administration. Moreover, the effectiveness of the operationalization of regional government administration and the continuity of development implementation is undoubtedly challenging for these acting officials, especially in dealing with regional legislative bodies (DPRD) in a political year with numerous demands, potentially leading to many "policy deadlocks."

Furthermore, the fact that they are appointed from above to be acting regional heads while also holding structural positions as civil state apparatus (ASN), with no deputy regional head to assist, limited authority as acting regional heads, and weak political leadership capabilities during an election year, can impact the performance of regional governments in fulfilling the mandate to recover the economy, which is deemed a necessary obligation.

3.4 Points of Potential Turmoil

There are several crucial issues indicating a strong potential for various disruptions. The first issue is the non-transparent and non-participative appointment of acting regional heads. It became obvious when Minister of Home Affairs Tito Karnavian inaugurated the acting

governor on May 12th. The public immediately questioned the appointment process, viewing it as contradictory to the basic principles of democracy. Questions arose, such as why a recently retired police general with no experience in civilian government was appointed as the Acting Governor of West Papua.

The second issue involves the appointment of active TNI members as acting regional heads. Numerous criticisms have been directed at the government, starting with the disregard for Constitutional Court Decision No. 15/PUU-XX/2022 and the neglect of the Civil Service Law No. 5/2014, which stipulates those structural positions within the civil service should not be held by TNI/Polri members except in ten ministries or agencies that do not include regional governments. There are also accusations of betraying the reforms that abolished the dual function of the military, indicating a weakening trust in civilian supremacy.

The third issue is the resistance from governors. Discontent between Southeast Sulawesi Governor Ali Mazi and North Maluku Governor Abdul Gani was evident when the inauguration of centrally appointed acting regents, who were not from the candidates proposed by the governors, was postponed. Such disagreements and differing views are unavoidable as regional authorities (governors) also feel justified and have strong reasons for their positions.

The sensitive point of this tumult doesn't seem to be stopping anytime soon, especially with no maximal effort to improve existing regulations. Only 42 interim regional heads have been appointed, leaving another 229 interim appointments to go. The variety of disturbances could extend to various fields, not just related to appointments and inaugurations. However, this vulnerable point will continue to complement the tumult in our democratic process.

If traced or tracked back, Indonesia originally did not have simultaneous regional elections. Elections were held in each region according to the end of the term of each regional head. After direct regional elections were introduced in 2005, there arose the significant issue of the high cost of implementation, draining the regional budget (APBD). So, the original intention was to reduce costs (budget). The pilot project at that time was in West Sumatra Province in 2005, and in Aceh Province in 2006, synchronizing the polling day for the gubernatorial election with the election of district heads or mayors in most areas where the end of the term of the regional heads was close. At that time, in West Sumatra, 14 out of 18 regions, and in Aceh, 20 out of 23 regions were synchronized.

The conclusion from combining the implementation of these regional elections was indeed a significant efficiency of around 60 percent of the total cost because the fees for the officials implementing the simultaneous regional elections (governor, district head, mayor) were only paid once. Another advantage (plus value) was that voters were not tired or fatigued because they did not have to go back and forth to the polling stations in close proximity to vote for governors and district heads or mayors.

Starting from these two regions (West Sumatra - Aceh), they became the embryo of our simultaneous regional elections (pilkada serentak). Two models developed, namely the wave-like simultaneous regional elections in itself and the wave-like simultaneous regional elections towards a national simultaneous regional election. Those are the options that have been continuously used or developed until now.

Our regional election legal politics choose the wave-like simultaneous regional elections towards a national simultaneous regional election. Only the year of its implementation is not synchronized with the years of presidential elections (Pilpres) and legislative elections (Pileg)

as stipulated in Law No. 8 of 2015 on Regional Elections. Presidential elections and legislative elections are held in 2024, while the national simultaneous regional elections are held in 2027, thirty months after the presidential elections and legislative elections. With this gap, the burden on the General Election Commission (KPU) as the organizer becomes lighter.

As a result, through Law No. 10 of 2016 on Regional Elections, changes were made, and the national simultaneous regional elections were accelerated to 2024, coinciding with the year of presidential and legislative elections, although the polling day is not the same. With this policy, the target is for presidential elections, legislative elections, and regional elections to all be completed in 2024, and the national and local development plans can be synchronized. However, the consequence is that the burden on the KPU is heavy, and the term of interim regional heads becomes longer. It would be wise to reflect on the implementation of the simultaneous presidential and legislative elections in 2019, which claimed nearly 1,000 lives of KPPS officers. The government briefly considered revising the regional election legal politics by abolishing the national simultaneous regional elections but still retaining the wave-like simultaneous regional elections (in 2020, 2022, and 2023). Subsequently, the wave-like simultaneous regional elections are held every five years.

Ultimately, it is regrettable. Because this idea, considered a solution-oriented thought, did not proceed with the concretization of the revision of Law No. 10 of 2016 on Regional Elections. If only this idea had been followed up by the current government, it could be ensured that there would be no chaos or tumult in the appointment of interim regional heads like the phenomenon present now, thus, this reality becomes a mirror that shows how the government itself "injures" the spirit of democracy in the homeland.

3.5 Exemplary Behavior of Public Officials

Collectively, we understand that ethical violations by public officials not only trigger public distrust but also disrupt the performance spirit of government institutions. Therefore, to uphold a clean and authoritative government, firmness in addressing public officials, including regional officials, who violate ethics, becomes a necessity.

Hence, the exemplariness of public officials becomes the key to maintaining public trust. Actions and decisions by public officials that spark controversy can distance them from this aspect of exemplariness. This condition not only leads to a crisis of trust but also potentially disrupts the stability of the performance spirit of newly inaugurated regional officials in overseeing the democratic process in Indonesia.

Therefore, regional officials entrusted by the central government must be able to serve as role models for the local community. It is necessary to address the question of whether public officials have been able to nurture public trust. Yet, the mandate and trust of the public should ideally guide public officials. Referring to the general provisions of Government Regulation No. 6 of 2010 concerning Public Information Transparency, public officials are defined as individuals appointed and assigned to occupy specific positions or roles in the government or positions in public bodies. They are divided into executive, legislative, judicial, and other bodies whose functions and main tasks are related to state administration.

As figures who play a major role in state administration and have direct contact with the interests of society, the existence of public officials is not limited to holding institutional roles and functions. More than that, the professionalism of public officials will also intersect with

political decision-making as role models for society.[8] It is not surprising that the question arises: have public officials carried out their duties and functions in a trustworthy manner (according to the rules)?

Such as the seriousness of officials (government elites), including those at the regional government level, to be "society examples", maintain public trust, and be responsible or transparent in the use of people's money. The portraits of regional government officials will be a reflection of preparing and/or carrying out various stages of elections as an embodiment of democratic values, where elections are one of the pillars of democracy in the country.

However, the other side is that the absence of role models or public trust in elites often leads to ethical and moral violations and can even be categorized as corrupt behavior. The 2021 Indonesia Corruption Watch (ICW) report revealed that corruption defendants were dominated by state officials. The largest number of corruption defendants, namely 363 people, were village officials, followed by regional government officials and employees who reached 346 people.

The red report card that highlights the manners of public officials is ironic because they should be present and serve the community with integrity. Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services mandates that public officials take a major role in being supervisors and those responsible for ensuring the smooth implementation of public services.[9] The ombudsman institution of the Republic of Indonesia states that the basic duties of public officials after being appointed are to guarantee and help the public obtain their rights and also carry out their full responsibilities. Apart from that, one of their duties is to provide public services that can satisfy the community and maintain public peace and order.[10]

As a result, the views of the public which encourage strict sanctions are proof that there is no room to tolerate all forms of ethical and moral violations by public officials, including regional government officials. It must be understood and realized that ethics should be part of the personal awareness of public officials. It is also their moral responsibility to maintain trust, respect for the law, and the quality of democracy in this beloved republic.

4 Conclusion

In this era of decentralization, ideally, the social relations between the people and local governments (Pemda) should become increasingly close. This aligns with constitutional norms that translate into laws granting sovereignty to the people to determine who their regional head and deputy regional head should be. It should also be emphasized that the process of filling vacant regional head positions is still within the scope of democratic interpretation as regulated in Article 18 Paragraph (4) of the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, the government must consider and pay attention to issuing implementing regulations as a follow-up to Article 201 of Law No. 10 of 2016.

From a democratic perspective, local governments are collections of autonomous, independent, and free-from-central-control local units of government. In this system, local governance encompasses institutions or organizations that provide services to the community. Democratic institutions in local politics reflect community participation because of the involvement of the community in every decision-making process.

The regional elections in 2024 hold significant strategic importance for various political forces at the national level. For political parties, the regional elections are not just arenas of democratic competition but also moments to gain political prestige that are expected to positively correlate with simultaneous legislative elections and presidential elections.

Therefore, it must be ensured that interim regional officials work professionally and neutrally. At this level, the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) also needs to pay special attention to the performance of officials in organizing the 2024 elections. KASN must be responsive to ensure that officials do not favor or engage in partisan actions that are contrary to the principles of neutrality or independence. Thus, civil servants (ASN) must remain nonpartisan.

Finally, from the exposition or brief notes in this article for the visiting professor, it can be concluded that it is imperative to improve the quality of democracy in Indonesia. Therefore, the government, as a stakeholder, is expected to always comply with existing regulations so that the decisions made do not result in legal flaws in the process of appointing interim regional officials.

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