

EMPIRICAL JURIDICAL ANALYSIS OF DPRD REPRESENTATION FUNCTION IN ABSORBING PUBLIC ASPIRATIONS IN BULELENG REGENCY

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the representation function of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Buleleng Regency in absorbing public aspirations based on Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, and to assess the effectiveness of its implementation. The problem examined is the persistent gap between the normative regulation of the representation function and its practical implementation, particularly regarding the follow-up of aspirations. This study employs an empirical legal research method with a socio-legal approach, using observation and documentation study of the Main Ideas (Pokok-Pokok Pikiran/Pokir) documents of the DPRD as well as relevant statutory regulations, analyzed descriptively and qualitatively. The results show that the DPRD of Buleleng Regency has implemented its representation function through recess activities, public hearings, and audiences, with the number of public aspirations successfully collected in 2025 reaching 1,046 proposals. However, the effectiveness of following up on these aspirations remains suboptimal due to budgetary constraints, weak follow-up mechanisms, and limited inter-institutional coordination. This study concludes that strengthening follow-up mechanisms, improving information transparency, and enhancing coordination between the DPRD and the regional government are necessary so that the representation function can operate more responsively and accountably.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a democratic state, as reflected in Article 2 paragraph (2) of the 1945 Constitution, which affirms that sovereignty rests with the people and is exercised in accordance with the Constitution. Under Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) is recognized as a regional people's representative institution that plays an important role in the administration of regional government. In addition to its legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions, the DPRD also performs a representation function, namely representing the interests of the community in every process of government administration through the absorption, collection, accommodation, and follow-up of public aspirations. This representation function is a strategic aspect because it reflects the principle of representative democracy at the local level. Under Article 161 letter i of Law Number 23 of 2014, DPRD members are required to absorb and collect constituents' aspirations through periodic work visits. One of the main instruments in carrying out this representation function is the recess activity, during which DPRD members visit their electoral districts to listen to and collect public aspirations directly. However, this obligation does not always run optimally because the results of recess are not always followed up, giving rise



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to a gap between the ideal concept of the representation function and the reality of its implementation. This condition is exacerbated by the communication distance between representatives and their constituents, the lack of transparency in decision-making, and the not yet optimal public accountability mechanisms.

At the Regional House of Representatives of Buleleng Regency, the implementation of representation in absorbing public aspirations has not been fully optimal. The results of recess, work visits, and public communication forums have not always been optimally integrated into public policy or regional development programs. Some members of the public consider that the aspirations submitted have not received adequate feedback, either in the form of progress information or policy realization. Previous related studies, such as research on the recess function of DPRD members in Bandung Regency, the repositioning of the Regional Representative Council, and the effectiveness of recess in Mataram City and Siak Regency, generally highlight the implementation of recess in general terms, but have not specifically examined the practice of DPRD representation in Buleleng Regency in absorbing and following up public aspirations empirically.

Based on the foregoing, the gap between the normative regulation of the representation function as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014 and the reality of its implementation by the DPRD of Buleleng Regency is the main focus of this article. This study aims to examine and analyze the implementation of the representation function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency in absorbing public aspirations, as well as to examine the effectiveness of the implementation of this absorption of aspirations in the practice of regional government administration. The originality of this study lies in its focus on specifically examining the practice of DPRD representation in Buleleng Regency empirically, not only on the normative aspect of its authority, but also on the effectiveness and obstacles in the process of absorbing and following up public aspirations.

METHODS

This study is an empirical legal research (field research) that examines and analyzes empirical facts through direct observation of the implementation of the representation function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency in absorbing public aspirations, using a socio-legal approach to analyze how the normative system operates within society. The research location is the Regional House of Representatives of Buleleng Regency. The data used consist of primary data obtained through interviews with internal parties of the DPRD, and secondary data in the form of statutory regulations, institutional documents, reports of the Main Ideas (Pokok-Pokok Pikiran/Pokir) of the DPRD, and literature related to regional government and political representation. Data collection techniques were carried out through observation and documentation study of recess activity reports, archives of public aspirations, and meeting minutes. The data were analyzed using a descriptive qualitative analysis method comprising data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, with the validity of the data verified through source and method triangulation.

Table 1. Recapitulation of Public Aspiration Documents for the Year 2025

No	Source of Aspirations	Number of Aspiration Documents
1	Pimpinan DPRD	106 aspiration records
2	Komisi I	210 aspiration records
3	Komisi II	263 aspiration records
4	Komisi III	260 aspiration records
5	Komisi IV	±207 aspiration records



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Source: Report Document of the Main Ideas (Pokok-Pokok Pikiran/Pokir) of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency, 2025

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Position and Representation Function of the DPRD in the Regional Government System. The Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) is a regional people's representative institution that holds the position of an element of regional government administration alongside the regional head. Under Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the DPRD has three main functions, namely the legislative, budgetary, and oversight functions, as well as a representation function realized through the activities of absorbing, accommodating, collecting, and following up public aspirations. According to Hanna Pitkin, political representation is a relationship between a representative and the represented, in which the representative has an obligation to act on behalf of the public's interests in the political decision-making process, so that representation is not merely understood as formal presence in the legislative body, but also encompasses the representative's capacity to substantively champion the public's aspirations. In the context of Buleleng Regency, the DPRD is responsible for channeling public aspirations to the regional government and championing those interests in the process of formulating regional policy, so that the DPRD is expected to become a liaison between the public and the regional government in realizing a democratic and responsive government.

Mechanism for Absorbing Public Aspirations by the DPRD. Government Regulation Number 12 of 2018 concerning Guidelines for the Preparation of DPRD Rules of Procedure serves as the operational guideline in carrying out recess, public hearings, and the mechanism for submitting and following up aspirations, so that the process of absorbing aspirations is not merely a formality, but must be carried out in a structured and accountable manner. Public aspirations submitted are recorded and documented by the DPRD secretariat for discussion in internal forums, before being forwarded to the relevant Commission (I, II, III, or IV) through a public hearing (RDP) together with the relevant agency. The DPRD of Buleleng Regency has also begun utilizing digital-based aspiration channels integrated with the SP4N-LAPOR! system, allowing the public to submit aspirations without having to be physically present, thereby broadening the reach of participation, particularly for communities in remote areas or with limited access. The provisions in the Rules of Procedure of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency make recess activities, audiences, public hearings, and direct communication with constituents formal mechanisms with a clear legal basis within the DPRD's institutional governance.

Implementation of the Absorption of Aspirations by the DPRD of Buleleng Regency. Hierarchically, the implementation of the absorption of public aspirations is grounded in the 1945 Constitution, which affirms the principle of popular sovereignty, reinforced by Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, which positions the DPRD as an element of regional government administration, as well as Law Number 17 of 2014 concerning the MD3, which affirms the obligation of DPRD members to absorb, collect, accommodate, and follow up public aspirations as a legal obligation, not merely a moral-political function. Based on documentation results and interviews with internal parties of the DPRD, public aspirations submitted are recorded by the DPRD secretariat for discussion in internal forums, then formulated into the Main Ideas (Pokok-Pokok Pikiran/Pokir) document of the DPRD, which becomes one of the inputs in the preparation of the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD). Thus, public aspirations do not merely stop at the collection stage but have the opportunity to be accommodated in the regional development planning

process, indicating a link between the DPRD's representation function and a participatory regional development planning system.

Effectiveness Level of the Implementation of Aspiration Absorption. The effectiveness of the implementation of the absorption of public aspirations can be seen from the extent to which the aspirations submitted can be accommodated, processed, and followed up by the DPRD in the form of policies or recommendations to the regional government. Based on the Pokir document of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency for 2025, the number of public aspirations successfully collected is shown in Table 1 below.

Based on Table 1, the DPRD leadership collected 106 aspiration records, Commission I 210 records, Commission II 263 records, Commission III 260 records, and Commission IV around 207 records, so that the overall number of documented public aspirations reached 1,046 proposals from various regions in Buleleng Regency. This data shows that the process of absorbing aspirations has been carried out actively. However, from the perspective of the Theory of Legal Effectiveness put forward by Soerjono Soekanto, effectiveness is determined not only by the number of aspirations collected, but also by legal factors, institutional factors, facility and infrastructure factors, and community factors. Not all aspirations can be immediately realized because they must go through a process of discussion, verification, and adjustment to development priorities and regional budget capacity. Related to Gustav Radbruch's Theory of Legal Certainty, the public often expects clarity regarding the follow-up of aspirations that have been submitted, yet not all aspirations receive adequate information regarding their progress or realization, so that the aspects of transparency and certainty of follow-up remain a challenge in the implementation of the representation function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Absorption of Public Aspirations. The implementation of the absorption of public aspirations by the DPRD of Buleleng Regency is influenced by interrelated supporting and hindering factors, as summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Absorption of Public Aspirations by the DPRD of Buleleng Regency

Aspect	Supporting Factors	Hindering Factors
Institutional	Formal mechanisms of recess, audiences, and public hearings, supported by the DPRD secretariat in Pokir documentation	The aspiration follow-up mechanism has not run optimally and remains inconsistent
Budget	Availability of recess budget allocation and secretariat administrative support	Limited regional budget capacity to realize all aspiration proposals
Public Participation	DPRD's openness in receiving aspirations and availability of the SP4N-LAPOR! digital channel	Some members of the public are not yet active in submitting aspirations due to limited access to information and communication with representatives

Source: Processed from activity reports and interview results with internal parties of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency, 2025

From the perspective of Lawrence M. Friedman's Theory of the Legal System, this condition shows a link between legal structure, reflected in the existence of the DPRD and the DPRD secretariat as implementing institutions, and legal substance in the form of statutory regulations and the DPRD's rules of procedure. In line with Jeremy Bentham's Theory of Legal Utility, the success of absorbing aspirations should be measured by the tangible benefits felt by the public through infrastructure development, improved public services, and empowerment programs, not merely by the number of aspirations received. Thus, the main challenge in implementing the representation

function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency lies in strengthening follow-up mechanisms, coordinating with the regional government, and improving information transparency to the public, so that the aspirations collected do not merely stop at the administrative documentation stage, but truly provide a tangible impact on the development and welfare of the community in Buleleng Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the implementation of the representation function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency in absorbing public aspirations has essentially been carried out in accordance with the provisions of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, through the mechanisms of recess, audiences, public hearings, and the written submission of aspirations, which are documented by the DPRD secretariat and formulated into the Main Ideas (Pokok-Pokok Pikiran/Pokir) of the DPRD as material for consideration in regional policy. The effectiveness of its implementation is reflected in the number of aspirations successfully collected in 2025, namely around 1,046 proposals from the leadership and all commissions of the DPRD, although this effectiveness remains influenced by limitations in follow-up mechanisms, inter-institutional coordination, and regional budget capacity, so that not all collected aspirations can be optimally realized in regional development policies and programs. Strengthening the aspiration follow-up mechanism, improving coordination between the DPRD and the regional government, and increasing information transparency to the public are important steps so that the representation function of the DPRD of Buleleng Regency can operate more effectively, participatively, and accountably. Further research is recommended to examine in greater depth the evaluation mechanism for aspiration follow-up and its impact on the level of public trust in regional legislative institutions.

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