

**FY 2012 Report by the Committee on Political and Administrative Reforms
Toward Enacting Political Party Law
– To Improve the Governance and Capability of Japanese Political Parties
(Summary Translation)**

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Osamu Nagayama

Chairman, Committee on Political and Administrative Reforms

(Chairman & CEO, Chugai Pharmaceutical Co., Ltd.)

<Objectives>

We urged the enactment of a political party law in our policy proposal titled “More Mature Party/Policy-Oriented Politics and Governing System Reform: Toward Realizing Politics Capable of Making Decisions” (May 17, 2012). As a follow-up proposal, this report aims to foster public awareness of the need to enact a political party law. Since it seems unlikely that a move to regulate political parties’ activities will be started by party lawmakers, we hope to see a growing call for such legislation among the public, prompting political parties to begin deliberations.

<Why does Japan need a political party law?>

1. As a result of a series of political system reforms, party leaderships have more power than ever before. However, there is practically no public statute controlling political parties. To complete a shift to a party-centered political system, Japan needs a legislation that stipulates matters regarding governance of political parties.
2. Currently, public funding for political parties amounts to as much as 32 billion yen a year. It is legitimate for taxpayers to call for the establishment of legislation regarding the governance of political parties, who expend such large amount of public money.
3. Political parties have always been considered to be private groups, not public ones. However, the public nature and responsibility of political parties should be defined by enacting a political party law.
4. In the current situation, in which matters concerning political parties are stipulated by separate laws, the activities of political parties are not easily exposed to public monitoring. In addition, it is difficult to systematically combine the regulations and rules that cover financial, organizational and other aspects of political parties.

5. A new system of political party governance, if established, will lead to improved policy planning capability and strengthened unity of political parties as organizations. With a political party law in place, excellent human resources attracted to the political world will increase.

<Nine recommendations on major issues to be covered by a political law>

1. Include “having a party platform” to the legal definition of a political party set forth by the law, and require political parties to make decisions at their party conventions in regard to developing or revising their party platforms.
2. Impose a limitation on the number of party chapters.
3. Stipulate, or standardize to some extent, the format and items of a manifesto, and require political parties to develop a democratic manifesto formulation process.
4. Predetermine the procedures for revising a manifesto.
5. Standardize to some extent the party leader election process. Especially for the ruling party, mandate primary elections and stipulate that the leader’s term of office shall be four years from being elected the prime minister.
6. Impose some restrictions on the use of party subsidies, and establish rules concerning how the party leadership allocates funds within the party.
7. In the case of coalitions, require the coalition parties to develop a manifesto for the coalition government.
8. Increase the transparency of the processes for endorsing candidates and ranking candidates on the proportional representation lists. For major parties, make it mandatory for them to accept candidates from the general public.
9. Stipulate a transparent decision-making process for expulsion or other disciplinary actions against party lawmakers. Guarantee by law the right to file objections.

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