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THE THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION BILL 2025 AND APVOTIK PUBLIC PETITION NO. 15 OF 2025

*A National Reform Blueprint for Responsible, Accountable, and Inclusive
Theological Education in Kenya
Strengthening Faith · Protecting Freedom · Ensuring Quality*

Comprehensive Progress Review Report and Policy Manuscript

Submitted to:

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Public Petitions Committee

Parliament Buildings, Nairobi

*Pursuant to Article 119 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 and
Standing Order 225(2)(b)*

Principal Submitting Institution

*Association of Pentecostal Vocational Training Institutions of
Kenya (APVOTIK)*

Chairperson:

Rev. Josiah Njiru Wajoshua

Collaborating Entities

Partner Theological Colleges

Ecclesiastical Institutions and Faith-Based Organizations

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Submitted for consideration and adoption by the Parliament of Kenya as part of the implementation framework for the Theological Education Bill 2025.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Introduction

Kenya stands at a pivotal moment in shaping its moral and educational future. The call for reform in theological education is not sudden. It is the culmination of decades of unregulated growth, deep devotion, and silent suffering within the faith community. Thousands of Christian institutions have trained leaders who serve tirelessly in churches, schools, relief missions, prisons, and local communities. Yet, they do so within a system that lacks national standards of accountability, academic legitimacy, and constitutional safeguards.

Public Petition No. 15 of 2025, presented to the National Assembly by the Association of Pentecostal Vocational Training Institutions of Kenya (APVOTIK), seeks urgent remedy. The proposal centers on the formal introduction of the Theological Education Bill 2025, a legislative step designed to establish quality, protect citizens, and affirm religious freedom.

The reform addresses multiple systemic concerns:

- the vulnerability of congregations to doctrinal abuse,
- the marginalization of pastors without formal certification,
- the risk of harmful, cult-like movements escaping oversight,
- the exclusion of faith education from national development structures,
- and the absence of an official platform for faith stakeholders in policymaking.

The petition argues that Kenya must regulate theological education not to restrict belief, but to protect belief from exploitation.

2. Why Reform Is Urgent

The urgency intensified following the Shakahola tragedy, which exposed the loss of life resulting from manipulation by untrained, unaccountable spiritual leaders. Kenya realized, painfully, that when religious instruction

is detached from ethical formation, faith can be turned into a weapon of harm.

Members of Parliament across party lines acknowledged this truth. They highlighted three points:

1. theological education must uphold public safety,
2. religious freedom must be safeguarded,
3. and the State must support structures that prevent extremism.

Significantly, supportive MPs saw this Bill not as a burden to the church, but as a shield for genuine faith and a filter against distortion.

Cautious MPs also contributed constructively. They emphasized respect for Article 32 of the Constitution — freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, and opinion. Their input refined the Bill to ensure clarity in scope, limited state intrusion, and guaranteed denominational diversity. Through these exchanges, Parliament reaffirmed something profound: spiritual responsibility is a matter of national interest.

4. What the Bill Proposes

The Theological Education Bill 2025 introduces several key institutional and regulatory mechanisms including:

- establishment of a Theological Education Council (TEC) as an independent, faith-led regulatory body
- accreditation and recognition of theological colleges and seminaries
- mandatory ethical standards to protect congregants and learners
- Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) to certify experienced ministers
- proportional representation of denominations to ensure inclusivity
- transparent communication and monitoring
- mechanisms that prevent financial and doctrinal exploitation
- and guaranteed protection of religious freedom

The TEC would partner with existing government agencies such as KNQA, TVETA, and CUE to ensure synergy with national education structures, while maintaining theological autonomy.

5. Grounded in Research and Consultation

This manuscript lays a solid foundation for the Bill across ten comprehensive chapters. These chapters together demonstrate intellectual rigor, legal coherence, policy alignment, and spiritual relevance.

The structure of the manuscript provides:

- Global context — showing that theological regulation is standard in many countries (Chapter 2)
- Constitutional grounding — illustrating legal and human rights imperatives (Chapter 3)
- Institutional validation — proving APVOTIK’s readiness and experience (Chapter 4)
- Parliamentary evidence — using Hansard analysis to showcase legislative support (Chapter 5)
- Strategic guidance — detailing a roadmap for stakeholder unity (Chapter 6)
- Legal precision — refining technical clauses and definitions (Chapter 7)
- Financial feasibility — presenting a realistic funding and implementation blueprint (Chapter 8)
- Projected national benefits — through measurable social, ethical, and security outcomes (Chapter 9)
- Implementation strategy — ensuring sustainability and phased progression (Chapter 10)

Each chapter builds upon the previous one to form a total policy framework capable of delivering long-term transformation.

6. Expected Outcomes

The reform's biggest impacts will be long-term — reshaping Kenya's religious, social, and ethical environment. Anticipated improvements include:

- Stronger theological institutions supported by legal recognition
- Professional ministry standards for training and ethical leadership
- Greater safety for congregations through prevention of manipulation and abuse
- Reduced extremism and improved national cohesion
- Increased trust between the church, the state, and the public
- Academic mobility for theology graduates in national systems
- Formal pathways for grassroots ministers through RPL, ending historical inequality
- Enhanced interdenominational cooperation built on mutual respect
- A well-regulated faith sector that upholds public interest

In effect, theology becomes part of the nation's development pipeline, contributing to values-based governance, peacebuilding, and community resilience.

7. Core Values Shaping the Reform

This reform rests on three philosophical pillars:

i. Faith Freedom

Worship remains free. Doctrine remains independent. Government does not dictate belief.

ii. Accountable Stewardship

Authority in ministry must protect human dignity. Leadership requires learning.

iii. Collaborative Governance

Church and State engage respectfully. Cooperation replaces tension.

These values mirror Kenya’s constitutional spirit and affirm shared guardianship over national ethics and wellbeing.

8. A National Legacy in the Making

The Executive Summary demonstrates that the Theological Education Bill 2025 is both a constitutional necessity and a spiritual responsibility. It is evidence-informed, prayer-supported, and publicly endorsed.

Its passage will:

- align theology with national goals in Vision 2030,
- professionalize faith leadership,
- elevate the church’s role in peace and development,
- equip citizens with trusted religious guidance,
- and protect vulnerable populations from manipulation.

Ultimately, the reform safeguards Kenya’s spiritual DNA. It ensures that future generations inherit churches led with integrity, grounded in truth, and accountable to both God and community.

As such, this Bill is not merely legislative — it is legacy-building. It binds guidance with governance, devotion with diligence, and revelation with responsibility.

If Parliament adopts this reform, Kenya will take a visionary step toward a society where:

faith transforms, leadership protects, and theology serves the nation’s good.

This moment invites our highest duty and our deepest faith — to shape a future where knowledge guards belief, and belief inspires justice.