



The Role of Bawaslu in Upholding Election Justice through Process Dispute Resolution in the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election

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Article received: 01 November 2025, Review process: 11 November 2025

Article Accepted: 25 Desember 2025, Article published: 12 Januari 2026

ABSTRACT

Independent candidacy in local head elections constitutes an important instrument for expanding political participation at the local level; however, in practice, it frequently gives rise to administrative disputes that directly affect the fulfillment of citizens' political rights. This study aims to analyze the resolution of disputes involving independent candidates in the 2024 Regional Head Election (Pilkada) of Boalemo Regency and to assess the role of the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu) in realizing electoral justice. The research employs a normative juridical method, using statutory, conceptual, and case study approaches focused on two independent candidacy disputes handled by the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu. The findings indicate that the disputes were primarily triggered by inconsistencies between support data recorded in the digital nomination system (SILON) and physical supporting documents, as well as procedural limitations in the verification process. Bawaslu functioned not merely as an enforcer of legal certainty but also as a corrective institution that safeguards political rights through adjudicative decisions and deliberative (musyawarah) mechanisms. The dispute resolution practices reflect a balanced application of procedural and substantive justice. This study concludes that strengthening institutional capacity, integrating electoral information systems, and optimizing non-litigation dispute resolution mechanisms are essential prerequisites for achieving electoral justice and enhancing the quality of local democracy.

Keywords: Bawaslu, Electoral Justice, Independent Candidates, Local Elections, Election Disputes.

ABSTRAK

Pencalonan perseorangan dalam pemilihan kepala daerah merupakan instrumen penting untuk memperluas partisipasi politik di tingkat lokal, namun dalam praktiknya sering memunculkan sengketa administratif yang berdampak langsung pada pemenuhan hak politik warga negara. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis penyelesaian sengketa pencalonan perseorangan dalam Pilkada Kabupaten Boalemo Tahun 2024 serta menilai peran Bawaslu dalam mewujudkan keadilan elektoral. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah yuridis normatif dengan pendekatan peraturan perundang-undangan, konseptual, dan studi kasus terhadap dua sengketa pencalonan perseorangan yang ditangani Bawaslu Kabupaten Boalemo. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa sengketa pencalonan dipicu oleh ketidaksinkronan antara data dukungan dalam sistem digital pencalonan (SILON) dan dokumen fisik, serta keterbatasan prosedural dalam proses verifikasi. Bawaslu berperan tidak hanya sebagai penegak kepastian hukum, tetapi juga sebagai lembaga korektif yang

menjamin perlindungan hak politik melalui putusan adjudikatif dan mekanisme musyawarah. Penyelesaian sengketa yang ditempuh mencerminkan penerapan keadilan prosedural dan substantif secara seimbang. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa penguatan kapasitas kelembagaan, integrasi sistem informasi, dan optimalisasi mekanisme non-litigasi merupakan prasyarat penting untuk mewujudkan keadilan elektoral dan memperkuat kualitas demokrasi lokal.

Kata Kunci: *Bawaslu, Calon Perseorangan, Keadilan Elektoral, Pilkada, Sengketa Pemilu.*

INTRODUCTION

The election of Regional Heads (Pilkada) is a constitutional arena where the principle of people's sovereignty is tested in the practice of local government. Unlike national elections which tend to be macro and standardized, the Regional Elections present more complex dynamics because they intersect directly with social relations, local interests, and the administrative capacity of regional organizers (Mahendra 2021). Therefore, the quality of local democracy is not only determined by the success of the implementation of voting, but especially by the fairness of the process from the early stages of candidacy.

In the context of modern electoral democracy, electoral justice cannot be reduced to procedural compliance with written norms. Justice also demands a corrective mechanism that can prevent the loss of citizens' political rights due to administrative errors, technical limitations, or narrow legal interpretations. Fair elections require that every citizen who meets the legal requirements has an equal opportunity to compete, both through political party and individual channels (Pardede 2014).

However, the practice of regional elections in Indonesia shows that the candidacy stage is often a source of recurring disputes. This dispute not only reflects the conflict between participants and organizers, but also indicates a tension between the normative goals of democracy and the reality of electoral bureaucracy. When these conflicts are not managed fairly and transparently, public trust in local democracy has the potential to be eroded (Fitri, Mas, and Nur 2023).

In Indonesia's electoral system, the General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) occupies a strategic position as an institution mandated to ensure the fairness of the electoral process. Bawaslu not only plays a role as a passive supervisor, but also as an institution that has an adjudicative function in resolving disputes in the election process. This function makes Bawaslu the last guardian of the electoral rights of election participants outside the judicial channels (Sutiani 2024).

Boalemo Regency, Gorontalo Province, presents a relevant empirical context to examine this role. In the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections, Boalemo was not only followed by candidate pairs carried by political parties, but also by individual candidate pairs. The presence of individual candidates marks the opening of space for political participation outside the party structure, as well as testing the readiness of the election administration system in managing support verification accurately and fairly. The fact that two pairs of individual candidates were declared ineligible by the Boalemo Regency KPU and then filed a dispute with Bawaslu shows that the nomination process has not been completely free from structural problems. The

dispute is not just a question of the number of support, but reflects a more fundamental problem related to verification transparency, data synchronization, and the protection of candidates' political rights. This condition makes the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election an important case to be analyzed from the perspective of election justice.

Normatively, the dispute settlement of the Pilkada process has a firm legal basis. Article 142 of Law Number 10 of 2016 gives authority to the district/city Bawaslu to receive, examine, and decide disputes in the regional head election process. This provision is emphasized through Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022 which regulates dispute resolution mechanisms, ranging from closed deliberations, open deliberations, to adjudicative decisions. The normative foundation does not stand alone, but is intertwined with constitutional principles as stipulated in Article 22E of the 1945 Constitution. The principles of direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair not only apply on voting day, but must also be realized in all stages of the election, including candidacy. Thus, electoral justice is a constitutional mandate that must be implemented consistently by all election organizers (Wardhana 2018).

However, the existence of legal norms does not always guarantee justice in practice. Differences in interpretation of the rules, limited time for handling disputes, and technical obstacles often affect the quality of Bawaslu's decisions. Therefore, it is important to assess how these norms are translated in dispute resolution practices at the local level (Sutiani 2024).

The main problem in the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election lies in the nomination stage of individual candidates, especially in the process of administrative verification and factual support. The discrepancy between the data listed in the candidacy information system (SILON) and the physical support documents is the main source of disputes. This condition raises questions about the accuracy of the digital system, the competence of the verifier, and the correction mechanisms available to candidates.

In addition, the limited time for handling disputes determined by laws and regulations has the potential to limit the space for deepening the facts by Bawaslu. In a short time, Bawaslu is required to examine evidence, hear the parties' statements, and produce a verdict that is fair and socially and politically acceptable. This challenge is even more complex when faced with limited resources and regional geographical conditions. Another problem is the potential reduction of the political rights of individual candidates due to an overly formalistic administrative approach. If dispute resolution is only oriented towards procedural certainty without considering the substance of political rights, then electoral justice risks being reduced to mere technical compliance. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze how Bawaslu Boalemo carries out its corrective function in this context (Hidayat 2020).

Many studies on the settlement of election disputes have been carried out, especially in the perspective of constitutional law and election law. Jimly Asshiddiqie emphasized that the election supervisory institution functions as a balancer of the power of the organizers, as well as the guardian of citizens' constitutional rights. Hadar Nafis Gumay revealed that disputes over the candidacy of individual

candidates are generally triggered by administrative problems and weak integration of information systems. Meanwhile, Ramlan Surbakti highlighted that the quality of elections is highly determined by the institutional capacity of organizers in responding to political and administrative dynamics in the field. However, most of these studies are still normative and have not explored much empirical practice of dispute resolution at the district level, especially with concrete case studies. Thus, this research is here to fill this gap through an empirical analysis based on the experience of the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu.

This research aims to analyze the role of the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu in realizing electoral justice through the resolution of process disputes in the 2024 Regional Elections. In particular, this study aims to examine the dispute resolution mechanism for the nomination of individual candidates, assess Bawaslu's decisions from the perspective of procedural and substantive justice, and identify institutional challenges faced in practice.

Theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the study of election law, especially related to the concept of electoral justice and the corrective function of election supervisory institutions. Practically, this research is expected to be an evaluation and recommendation material for Bawaslu and the KPU in improving the dispute resolution mechanism of the Regional Election process, especially in the management of the candidacy of individual candidates at the local level.

METHODS

This study employs a normative–empirical qualitative research design with a case study approach. The normative approach is conducted through an analysis of statutory regulations and legal instruments governing electoral dispute resolution, particularly Law No.(Nasadi and Akdaji 2025). 1 of 2015, Law No. 7 of 2017, relevant Bawaslu Regulations, and Bawaslu Decisions concerning dispute settlement mechanisms. This approach aims to examine the legal basis, authority, and procedural framework of Bawaslu in resolving regional election disputes(Hastia 2025). To support the normative analysis, a literature review was conducted using academic books and peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2010 and 2024, selected based on journal accreditation, scholarly reputation, and relevance to electoral justice and election supervision. The empirical approach complements the normative analysis by examining how legal norms are implemented in practice through an in-depth case study of independent candidacy disputes in the 2024 Boalemo Regency Local Election(Hijrah Lahaling, Arhjayati Rahim, Sumiyati Beddu, Dzikra Ridha Dwi Aribah 2025).

The empirical data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis(Sahar et al. 2025). The research location includes the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu and the Boalemo Regency General Election Commission (KPU), as these institutions play a central role in the supervision and resolution of election process disputes. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, comprising Bawaslu commissioners, KPU commissioners, provincial Bawaslu officials, election participants, political party representatives, and local academics. Data analysis was conducted qualitatively

using a normative–empirical analytical model, combining statutory analysis with descriptive–interpretative analysis of field data (Cruzz, Abdillah, and Rahman 2025). The collected data were processed through thematic coding to identify patterns, institutional challenges, and corrective practices in dispute resolution. Triangulation of interviews, observations, and official documents was applied to ensure data validity and reliability. Through this analytical framework, the study evaluates not only legal compliance but also the effectiveness of institutional practices in realizing electoral justice at the local level (Hasan et al. 2025).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Normative Basis of the Role of Bawaslu in Resolving Disputes in the Regional Election Process

Conceptually and normatively, the existence of Bawaslu in the Indonesian electoral system cannot be separated from the need to maintain electoral justice as an integral part of constitutional democracy. In this context, Bawaslu is not only positioned as an administrative supervisor, but also as an institution that has a corrective function against potential deviations of the power of election organizers. This function acquires juridical legitimacy through explicit arrangements in laws and regulations (Hayckel, Paskarina, and Solihah 2024).

Article 95 letter c of Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections emphasizes that Bawaslu is authorized to receive, examine, and decide disputes in the election process between participants and organizers. This authority in the Regional Election regime is reaffirmed in Article 142 of Law Number 10 of 2016, which specifically grants attribution of authority to the district/city Bawaslu to resolve disputes over the regional head election process. Thus, Bawaslu is not just an extension of administrative supervision, but is a non-judicial adjudicative institution that carries out quasi-judicial functions (Silalahi 2024).

The authority was then operationalized through Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022 concerning Procedures for Settlement of Election Disputes. This regulation not only regulates procedural aspects, but also reflects Bawaslu's normative orientation in placing deliberation as the main instrument for dispute resolution, before pursuing open adjudication. The choice of this model shows that the settlement of election disputes in Indonesia is not entirely adversarial, but contains deliberative and restorative dimensions.

From the perspective of constitutional law theory, Jimly Asshiddiqie (2019) places the supervision and settlement of election disputes as part of the checks and balances mechanism in a democratic country. According to him, elections without an effective correction mechanism have the potential to turn into a formal procedure that ignores the substance of people's sovereignty. Therefore, the authority of Bawaslu in resolving process disputes must be understood as a constitutional guarantee so that citizens' political rights are not reduced by administrative actions of organizers (Jimly Asshiddiqie 2021).

Thus, normatively, the role of Bawaslu in resolving Pilkada disputes has a strong legal foundation and clear theoretical legitimacy, both within the framework of the state of law (*rechtsstaat*) and electoral democracy. The question then is no

longer whether Bawaslu has the authority, but how the authority is carried out in concrete practice at the regional level.

Individual Candidacy Disputes in the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election: Case Analysis

The 2024 Boalemo Regency Regional Election represents a concrete portrait of how the individual nomination mechanism works in the practice of local democracy in Indonesia. The presence of two pairs of individual candidates in this contest not only shows the opening of space for political participation outside the political party line, but also tests the capacity of the electoral legal system in ensuring the protection of citizens' political rights. In this context, individual candidacy is an important indicator of the extent to which local democracy is able to strike a balance between administrative order and substantive justice.

Normatively, individual candidacy is strictly regulated in Article 41 paragraph (1) of Law Number 10 of 2016, which requires the support of at least 10% of the number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT) and is spread across at least four sub-districts. This provision is basically intended to ensure that individual candidates have a real support base in the community. However, in practice, these provisions are often a source of dispute due to the complexity of the support verification process, both administratively and factually.

In the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election, the Wahyudin Lihawa-Riko Djaini couple and the Burhanuddin Pulubuhu-Rivendy Luawo pair have submitted support according to the normative threshold, which is around 10,840 supports. Quantitatively, this figure has met the minimum requirements set by law. However, the results of verification conducted by the Boalemo Regency KPU stated that the two couples were not eligible (TMS). This decision is outlined in Minutes Number 146 and 213 of 2024 and directly aborts the right of both couples to proceed to the next stage of candidacy.

The determination of TMS is the starting point for the emergence of disputes in the election process. From the perspective of election law, individual candidacy disputes cannot be viewed as ordinary administrative issues, as they concern citizens' constitutional right to vote. These rights are part of the political rights guaranteed by the 1945 Constitution and can only be limited through a fair, proportionate and accountable legal mechanism. Therefore, any administrative decision that has implications for the loss of these rights must be tested through an effective dispute resolution mechanism.

As stated by Hadar Nafis Gumay (2018), disputes over the candidacy of individual candidates are generally rooted in administrative problems and insynchronization between the digital system of candidacy and physical support documents. Candidacy Information Systems (SILONs), which are designed to improve the accuracy and efficiency of endorsement verification, often pose new problems, especially when there is a discrepancy in data between digital uploads and manual proofs owned by candidates. This phenomenon is also evident in the case of Boalemo.

In the first dispute filed by the Wahyudin Lihawa-Riko Djaini couple, the Applicant postulated that there was a number of legitimate support that was not recognized by the Boalemo Regency KPU. In addition, the administrative verification process is considered not to be carried out in a transparent and accountable manner. This argument shows that there is a tension between the administrative authority of the KPU and the candidate's right to obtain certainty and clarity on the results of verification of support.

The Boalemo Regency Bawaslu, after declaring that the application meets the formal and material requirements, continues to handle disputes through a closed deliberation mechanism as stipulated in Article 25 paragraph (1) of Bawaslu Regulation Number 9 of 2022. This stage reflects a non-litigation approach that prioritizes dialogue and clarification between parties. However, when the closed deliberation did not reach an agreement, Bawaslu continued the process to open deliberation.

In the open trial, the deliberative panel examined the evidence comprehensively, including the Individual Form B.1-KWK, screenshots of SILON, and the statements of the parties. This evidentiary process is crucial because it determines whether the KPU's administrative decisions are in accordance with the principles of prudence and justice. The Bawaslu decision that granted the partial request and ordered the KPU to re-clarify a number of supports shows that Bawaslu does not position itself as an institution that merely affirms the KPU's decision. On the contrary, Bawaslu carries out a corrective function to ensure that potential verification errors do not lead to the loss of the candidate's political rights.

This approach is in line with the view of Jimly Asshiddiqie who emphasized that electoral justice must be able to balance legal certainty and the protection of citizens' political rights. In the context of the Wahyudin Lihawa-Riko Djaini dispute, Bawaslu seeks to maintain this balance by not necessarily canceling the KPU's decision, but also not turning a blind eye to possible administrative errors.

In contrast to the first dispute, the second dispute filed by the Burhanuddin Pulubuhu-Rivendy Luawo couple shows a more compromising settlement dynamic. This dispute relates to the results of the second stage of factual verification, in which the Applicant considers that there is support that should be recognized as legitimate. Through a closed deliberation mechanism, the parties finally reached a mutual agreement. The agreement provides room for the Applicant to add 240 additional supports in SILON, which must then be re-verified by the Boalemo Regency KPU.

This settlement model shows that election disputes do not always have to end in a win-lose adjudicative decision. On the contrary, settlement through agreement can be an effective instrument for realizing substantive justice, as long as the political rights of candidates are protected and the principles of honest and fair elections are not violated. This approach reflects the spirit of restorative justice in electoral law, where the main goal is not only the enforcement of norms, but also the restoration of rights and socio-political stability (Suryani et al. 2024).

From these two cases, it can be seen that the dispute over individual candidacy in Boalemo does not stand alone, but is part of a structural problem in the implementation of the Regional Elections. The complexity of support verification, the

limitation of information system integration, and the time pressure of the election stage are factors that affect the quality of administrative decisions. In such conditions, the role of Bawaslu as a dispute resolution institution becomes very decisive.

The analysis of the Boalemo case shows that the existence of Bawaslu provides an important correction space for the KPU's decision, as well as a mechanism to protect the political rights of individual candidates. The dispute also asserts that electoral fairness cannot be reduced to formal adherence to procedures, but should be seen as an ongoing effort to ensure that every citizen has a fair chance in political contestation. Thus, the dispute over individual candidacy in the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election is a real reflection of the challenges and at the same time an opportunity for strengthening local democracy in Indonesia.

Dispute Resolution, Electoral Justice, and Institutional Strengthening Solutions

The settlement of individual candidacy disputes in the 2024 Boalemo Regency Regional Election shows clearly how the electoral law mechanism works in a very sensitive space, namely at the meeting point between legal certainty, the protection of citizens' political rights, and the stability of local democracy. From the two disputes submitted by prospective individual candidate pairs, it appears that the role of the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu cannot be reduced solely as an institution that checks procedural compliance, but as an institution that has a constitutional mandate to maintain electoral justice as a whole (Ananingsih 2016).

In the context of election law, candidacy disputes have a distinctive character compared to outcome disputes. This dispute occurs in the early stages of the electoral process, but it has a very decisive impact on the quality of democracy, because it concerns whether or not someone has access to become an election participant. Therefore, errors in handling candidacy disputes have the potential to cause *democratic exclusion*, namely the obstruction of citizens' right to vote not because of substantive considerations, but due to administrative errors or weaknesses in the verification system.

1. Bawaslu as the Guardian of Electoral Justice

In the theory of electoral justice, Jimly Asshiddiqie (2019) emphasized that electoral justice should not be understood narrowly as mechanical obedience to written rules. Electoral justice must be seen as a unity between *procedural justice* and substantive justice. Procedural fairness emphasizes the importance of compliance with norms, stages, and deadlines that have been determined by laws and regulations. Meanwhile, substantive justice demands that the process result in real protection of citizens' political rights, especially the right to vote and be elected.

In the first dispute filed by the Wahyudin Lihawa-Riko Djaini couple, the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu showed a real effort to balance the two dimensions of justice. The decision granting the partial request and ordering the KPU to re-clarify a number of supports reflects a proportionate corrective approach. Bawaslu does not necessarily cancel all KPU verification results, but also does not allow potential verification errors to lead to the loss of political rights of applicants (Ersan and Erliyana 2018).

This approach shows that Bawaslu carries out its function as a *guardian of electoral justice*, not just a *procedural referee*. Bawaslu not only assesses whether the KPU has carried out the stages according to the rules, but also assesses whether the results of the stages have reflected fairness and rationality. In this context, Bawaslu acts as an institution that ensures that procedures do not turn into instruments of political exclusion.

2. Deliberation as an Instrument of Restorative Justice

The second dispute filed by the Burhanuddin Pulubuhu-Rivendy Luawo pair shows another dimension of the settlement of election disputes, namely the use of closed deliberation mechanisms as a means of achieving substantive justice. The agreement reached by the parties, which gives the applicant room to add 240 additional supports in SILON and be re-verified by the KPU, reflects a *restorative justice* approach (Karjono and Malau 2024).

In the framework of restorative justice, the main purpose of dispute resolution is not to determine the winner or loser, but to restore potentially violated rights and prevent the escalation of conflict. This approach is particularly relevant in the context of local elections, where social relations between political actors tend to be close and prolonged conflicts can disrupt regional socio-political stability.

The closed deliberation in this dispute shows the flexibility of election law in responding to the dynamics of the field. Instead of imposing rigid adjudicative decisions, Bawaslu facilitates dialogue that produces practical and fair solutions. This is in line with the spirit of Perbawaslu Number 9 of 2022 which provides space for dispute resolution through deliberation as the main mechanism before adjudication.

However, the use of deliberation as an instrument for dispute resolution also requires high integrity and professionalism from the organizers. Deliberation can only produce justice if it is conducted transparently, free from pressure, and oriented towards the protection of political rights, not just pragmatic compromises.

3. Institutional Challenges in Dispute Resolution

While Boalemo's dispute resolution practices demonstrate a commitment to electoral justice, the case also uncovers a number of institutional challenges that deserve attention. One of the main challenges is the limited time for handling disputes, which is a maximum of 12 working days as stipulated in Article 28 of Perbawaslu Number 9 of 2022. In practice, these deadlines are often disproportionate to the complexity of proof, especially in individual nomination disputes involving thousands of endorsements.

Deepening administrative and digital evidence requires time, precision, and adequate human resource capacity. When time becomes very limited, there is a risk that the examination process will not be able to dig up the facts optimally. This condition has the potential to shift the focus of dispute resolution from the search for substantive truth to simply fulfilling procedural deadlines.

Another challenge that emerges is the insynchronization between the digital data in SILON and the physical supporting documents. In many cases, substantially legitimate support may be declared ineligible due to input errors, system glitches, or

limited technical understanding of the operator. This inconsistency not only has an impact on the verification results, but also creates legal uncertainty for individual candidates.

In addition, the limitations of technological infrastructure and the technical capacity of organizers at the district level also affect the effectiveness of dispute resolution. In the context of an area such as Boalemo, geographical challenges, limited internet networks, and lack of technical training are factors that cannot be ignored.

4. Election Effectiveness and Institutional Capacity

In the perspective of Ramlan Surbakti (2010), the effectiveness of elections is not only determined by the design of regulations, but also by the institutional capacity of organizers in translating rules into fair and responsive practices. Institutional capacity includes aspects of human resources, information systems, inter-institutional coordination, and organizational culture that upholds professionalism and integrity.

The Boalemo case shows that although the regulatory framework is available, its effectiveness depends heavily on the ability of Bawaslu and the KPU to manage the dynamics of the field. When institutional capacity is limited, the potential for administrative errors increases, ultimately opening up a space for repeated disputes.

Therefore, the settlement of individual candidacy disputes cannot be separated from the agenda of strengthening the institution of election organizers. This strengthening should be understood as a long-term investment to maintain the quality of local democracy, not just a reactive response to electoral conflicts.

5. Normative, Technical, and Institutional Solutions

Based on the lessons learned from the individual candidacy dispute in Boalemo, there are several solutions that can be offered comprehensively. First, in the normative aspect, it is necessary to improve regulations related to the verification of support for individual candidates. Regulations need to provide clearer guidance on the treatment of digital and physical data differences, as well as correction mechanisms that do not harm candidates' political rights.

Second, in the technical aspect, the synchronization of the SILON system with the Bawaslu supervision system is an urgent need. The integration of this system will allow real-time monitoring of the verification process, so that potential errors can be detected early and do not accumulate into disputes. In addition, improving the security and stability of digital systems must also be a priority.

Third, in the institutional aspect, strengthening the capacity of human resources of Bawaslu and KPU is absolutely necessary. Ongoing training in digital evidence analysis, data management, and dispute resolution techniques will improve the quality of decision-making. In addition, strengthening coordination between organizers needs to be carried out not only formally, but also through a more collaborative work mechanism.

The optimization of the closed deliberation mechanism also needs to continue to be developed as a fast, efficient, and fair dispute resolution instrument. However,

this mechanism must be equipped with strict ethical and procedural standards to prevent abuse of authority.

6. Institutional Ethics and the Future of Electoral Justice

As emphasized by Dian Agung Putra (2021), the implementation of fair elections is not only determined by the quality of regulations, but also by institutional ethics that uphold independence, professionalism, and accountability. Institutional ethics are the foundation that ensures that the great authority possessed by election organizers is used solely to protect the political rights of citizens.

In the context of Boalemo, the practice of dispute resolution by Bawaslu shows that electoral justice can still be realized even though faced with structural limitations. Commitment to the protection of political rights, openness to correction, and willingness to use a deliberative approach are key factors in maintaining the integrity of local democracy.

Thus, the dispute over individual candidacy in the 2024 Boalemo Regional Election is not only relevant as a local case study, but also makes an important contribution to the development of national discourse on electoral justice and institutional strengthening of election organizers. The lessons learned from this case confirm that a healthy local democracy requires organizers who are not only rule-abiding, but also sensitive to the substance of justice and the political rights of citizens.

CONCLUSION

The dispute over individual candidacy in the 2024 Boalemo Regency Regional Election shows that the electoral law mechanism has a crucial role in maintaining a balance between legal certainty and the protection of citizens' political rights. The two disputes filed by prospective spouses of individual candidates emphasized that the problem of candidacy is not solely administrative, but has direct implications for the fulfillment of the constitutional right to vote. In this context, the Boalemo Regency Bawaslu has carried out its functions in a corrective and progressive manner by not being trapped in a purely procedural approach, but rather prioritizing electoral justice that includes procedural and substantive dimensions. The decision granting partial applications and settlement through deliberation reflects efforts to restore political rights while maintaining the stability of local democracy. However, the dispute resolution practice also revealed institutional limitations, especially related to dispute handling deadlines, digital and physical data insynchronization, and the technical capacity of election organizers at the regional level.

Based on these findings, this study recommends several strategic steps. First, it is necessary to improve the regulation on the verification of support for individual candidates to be more adaptive to the dynamics of using digital systems and provide fair correction space without sacrificing legal certainty. Second, strengthening the institutional capacity of election organizers, especially Bawaslu and regional KPU, needs to be carried out through continuous training in digital data management and examination of candidacy disputes. Third, the integration and synchronization of the candidacy information system with the supervision system must be prioritized to

minimize the potential for similar disputes in the future. With these steps, the implementation of the Regional Elections is expected not only to run according to procedures, but also to be able to ensure electoral justice and strengthen the quality of local democracy in a sustainable manner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments can be made to sponsors or funding parties, to those involved in the research and to loved ones (avoid flowery acknowledgments) and to Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum.

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