

Legal Vacuum Regarding the Filling of Regional Heads During the Transition Period of the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the legal vacuum in filling regional head positions during the transitional period of the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections in Indonesia. The transitional period poses challenges in appointing interim regional heads, as existing regulations lack clarity on authority, responsibilities, and legitimacy. This research aims to analyze the gaps in the legal framework and provide recommendations to address these issues. Utilizing normative legal research methods with a statute and conceptual approach, this study examines existing laws and regulations, including Law No. 10 of 2016 and related ministerial regulations. The findings reveal significant limitations in defining the scope of interim officials' authority, creating uncertainty in governance and public trust. The research concludes that the absence of comprehensive regulations impacts regional administration stability, emphasizing the urgency of establishing clear guidelines for interim appointments. By addressing these legal voids, the study offers solutions to ensure effective governance, enhance transparency, and uphold democratic principles during the transitional period.

Keywords : legal vacuum, filling regional heads, interim regional heads

INTRODUCTION

The constitution serves as the primary foundation and guideline for the government in exercising power and managing the governance system. There are two main forms of constitution: written fundamental law, such as the Constitution of 1945 (UUD), and unwritten fundamental law. Both forms play a crucial role in establishing governance and determining the relationships between state institutions as well as the basic rights of citizens. As a manifestation of noble values and social norms that prevail within society, a written constitution also reflects the adaptation of existing administrative practices (Asshiddiqie, 2011). For Indonesia, the 1945 Constitution functions as the written fundamental law that underpins the constitutional basis of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI). As the highest document, the 1945 Constitution articulates the fundamental principles of Indonesian statehood and serves as the main reference in formulating legal rules and public policies. The constitution delineates explicit guidelines regarding the structure and functions of state institutions, as well as the limitations of authority that must be upheld by the government in the execution of its responsibilities (Simamora, 2018).

The Indonesian democratic system, through the direct election of regional heads and their deputies, has provided a significant avenue for citizens to participate directly in local politics. The regional elections, which began in 2005, have demonstrated their effectiveness in realizing a government based on community participation. Currently, the main focus is to maintain and enhance voter participation levels and to ensure healthy competition in political contests, both of which are considered essential for ensuring the

legitimacy of elections and fostering stronger public representation in regional governance (Yuniarto, 2020).

At the end of 2021, discussions emerged about holding regular regional head elections (*pilkada*) that should occur every five years without waiting until 2024. Consequently, elections for certain governors whose terms end in 2022 were to be held that same year. This also applies to other regions with terms ending in 2023 (Ramdani, 2022). However, this normalization plan appears to have faltered after the election laws were canceled and related amendments of Article 201 paragraph (8) of Law No. 10 of 2016 stipulate that simultaneous regional elections will take place in November 2024, with all regions of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia required to vote simultaneously for the elections of governors, regents, and mayors. The simultaneous regional head elections in Indonesia were first introduced through Law No. 22 of 2007 to unify the execution of previously uncoordinated regional elections (Arhdan & Khairani, 2023). The primary objective of conducting simultaneous regional elections is to increase election efficiency, save budgets, and strengthen political stability at the regional level. In 2016, the government formulated a simultaneous schedule for regional head elections with a target for all regional elections to be unified by 2024. The postponement of these simultaneous regional elections has affected the smoothness of regional leadership, as many regional heads have their terms end early and require the appointment of interim officials until the next elections. This situation has led to a legal vacuum, particularly concerning the authority of interim regional heads who carry out duties during this transition period (Arif, 2020).

The vacancy in regional leadership after the term of a regional head concludes can have significant impacts on various aspects of governance and public services. Without a definitive leader, regional administration is often hindered, resulting in disruptions in the implementation of policies and programs that should be executed (Nurani, 2023). Vital functions such as decision-making, budget oversight, and the implementation of development projects can be halted, affecting the welfare of the community and public trust in the government. This consequence becomes increasingly evident when we consider the empirical context, where there were 101 positions of regional heads that experienced vacancies in 2022 and 170 positions in 2023 (Kusuma et al., 2022). This figure reflects a greater potential for a leadership crisis, with the risk of increasing political and social instability. Devoid of an authoritative leader, the decision-making process is impeded, and public services may be neglected, creating dissatisfaction among citizens who require basic services. Thus, the appointment of interim regional heads becomes a crucial step to bridge the vacancy. However, without clear guidelines and adequate authority, these appointed officials may not be able to perform their duties effectively, which in turn could exacerbate existing conditions. Therefore, addressing the leadership vacancy appropriately is urgently required to maintain government continuity and meet community needs (A. A. Pratama et al., 2024).

Article 201, paragraph (9) of Law No. 10 of 2016, provides a critical legal foundation for appointing interim officials through regional heads. This provision specifies that an interim regional head is designated to fill the vacancy created by the conclusion of a regional head's term. The appointed regional head is tasked with ensuring the continuity of administration and public services until the subsequent regional head election. However, there are certain limitations within this provision that warrant careful consideration (Mukhsan, 2024). The law does not clearly define the boundaries of the authority and duties of interim regional heads, which can lead to confusion regarding their

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decision-making capacity. Undefined authority may jeopardize the effectiveness of local government management, especially in situations where the interim head must make important decisions related to public policy. Another limitation that must be considered is the issue of legitimacy. Although interim officials are appointed according to legal provisions, their existence is often perceived as lacking a direct mandate from the people, unlike elected regional heads (Kurnia & Rizari, 2019). Uncertainty regarding the duration of interim appointments may also affect their legitimacy, especially if they are required to serve for longer than expected, which could result in challenges in policy implementation and public support. Therefore, there is an urgent need to clarify the provisions regarding the authority, duties, and legitimacy of interim officials in filling regional head positions for extended periods (Utama et al., 2023).

The legal vacuum surrounding the appointment of interim regional heads stems from the absence of regulations that delineate the mechanisms, authority, and responsibilities of these officials who take the place of definitive appointees (A. B. Pratama, 2024). Without clear guidelines, confusion arises over the scope of tasks that interim officials may undertake, an issue that becomes particularly critical when their tenure extends longer than initially expected. Therefore, it is essential to establish clear implementing regulations that outline the duties and restrictions for interim officials to ensure the uninterrupted functioning of regional governance (Fairi, 2023). This research will explore the legal vacuum in the mechanism for appointing interim regional heads, as well as the challenges and efforts related to filling these interim positions.

Although existing regulations, such as Law No. 10 of 2016, provide a legal framework for appointing interim regional heads, they fail to comprehensively address the authority, legitimacy, and responsibilities of these officials. Prior studies primarily focus on the political dynamics of regional elections, neglecting the legal and administrative challenges during transitional periods. This research bridges the gap by critically analyzing the implications of this regulatory void, particularly concerning governance continuity, public trust, and the democratic process during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections.

The simultaneous termination of regional head terms in 2024 creates a unique and pressing governance challenge. Without clear legal provisions, interim officials may lack legitimacy, leading to ineffective governance, administrative delays, and public dissatisfaction. The urgency to address this issue is amplified by the risk of governance instability during a critical national electoral event. Clear and enforceable regulations are essential to uphold democratic principles, ensure seamless leadership transitions, and maintain public trust in regional administrations.

This study introduces a novel perspective by examining the transitional governance challenges during the 2024 Simultaneous Regional Elections through the lens of legal vacuum and democratic accountability. Unlike previous research, which predominantly discusses electoral dynamics, this study focuses on the interplay between legal frameworks, interim leadership, and public trust. By offering actionable recommendations for regulatory reform, it provides a comprehensive approach to bridging gaps in governance and legal frameworks specific to Indonesia's unique electoral context.

The study aims to analyze the legal framework governing interim regional heads and propose solutions to address the identified gaps. It seeks to ensure effective governance during transitional periods and enhance the legitimacy of interim appointments. The research benefits policymakers by providing actionable insights for

legal reform, while also aiding regional governments in maintaining administrative continuity. For the public, this study fosters trust in the governance process by promoting transparency, accountability, and adherence to democratic principles.

RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, the legal research method employs a statute approach, also known as a normative legal research approach. This process aims to identify legal rules, legal principles, and legal doctrines to address the legal issues surrounding the legal vacuum in the mechanism for appointing interim regional heads, as well as the challenges and efforts related to this appointment mechanism (Marzuki, 2019). The case approach involves analyzing and examining legal problems using specific cases as guidelines. Furthermore, the conceptual approach is based on the views and doctrines or thoughts of various legal scholars that have developed within the law. Through these various approaches and legal research methods, this study will analyze the legal vacuum in the mechanism for appointing interim regional heads, along with the challenges and initiatives associated with this appointment mechanism.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Legal Void in the Mechanism for Filling the Position of Temporary Regional Head

The vacancy in the position of regional head occurs when the term of office of an existing regional head has ended, but the election for a new regional head has not yet been conducted. In this regard, Law Number 10 of 2016 stipulates that to fill this vacancy, an interim regional head will be appointed. This appointment aims to ensure that regional governance continues to operate smoothly and remains uninterrupted during the transition period leading to the subsequent regional head elections. However, the appointment of interim regional heads has several limitations. These limitations relate to the scope of authority possessed by the interim officials. The law does not provide sufficient details regarding the restrictions on the authority and responsibilities that these officials must undertake. This situation raises the risk that interim officials may exceed the established authority limits, thereby affecting the legitimacy and effectiveness of regional governance.

The power to perform certain legal actions, along with the rights and obligations to act or refrain from acting in particular ways, are fundamental components of the official's authority. The concept of legality indicates that the foundation of government power is derived from statutory regulations. The responsibilities and authority of interim regional heads must be grounded in law. Following the regional head elections, the responsibilities and authority exercised by interim officials should mirror those of definitive regional heads. The transfer of power is typically witnessed by a minister or an appointed official. According to Article 1, paragraph 1 of Presidential Regulation Number 16 of 2016, during a vacancy, the President has the authority to appoint an official to fill the position. This provision indicates that the authority held by interim regional heads is equivalent to that of definitive officials, although there are restrictions imposed through implementing regulations. The responsibilities and powers of regional heads are outlined in Article 65, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Regional Government Law, which emphasizes the head's duties in leading the implementation of governmental affairs and maintaining public order.

The implementation of the simultaneous national elections in 2024 is designed to regulate the election of governors, regents, and mayors, including the potential shortening

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or reduction of the terms of office for regional heads. Based on Article 201 of Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning the Election of Governors, Regents, and Mayors, this process is characterized as temporary and transitional, indicating that the terms of all regional heads will end simultaneously with the upcoming elections. Consequently, the elections will renew the entire leadership across various levels of government simultaneously throughout Indonesia. This explanation underscores the importance of clear regulations in the implementation of simultaneous elections to ensure a smooth and coordinated power transition, as well as to strengthen the legitimacy of leaders elected through a democratic process. The synchronous termination of regional head terms across the country also aims to simplify the political and administrative process, allowing voters to cast their ballots in a more uniform and integrated context.

Article 201, paragraphs (9), (10), and (11) of Law Number 10 of 2016 regulates who is entitled to fill the vacancies in the positions of governor, vice governor, regent, and mayor. Paragraph (9) states that interim officials for these positions are appointed to fill the vacancy until the simultaneous elections are held. Paragraph (10) indicates that in the event of a governor's vacancy, a high-ranking official will be appointed until a new governor is inaugurated. Meanwhile, paragraph (11) explains that if the positions of regent or mayor are vacant, a senior official from a school may appoint an interim official to fill the position until the definitive official is inaugurated. The term "acting person" refers to an individual temporarily authorized to fill a vacant position, possessing all the powers of a permanent regional head.

Articles 201, paragraphs (9), (10), and (11) of Law Number 10 of 2016 provide a legal framework for filling vacancies at the regional level, such as those for governors, vice governors, regents, and mayors. Paragraph (9) states that interim officials are appointed to fill vacancies until the simultaneous elections take place. This is intended to ensure the continuity of governance, even when the position is not permanently filled. Paragraph (10) emphasizes that in the event of a governor's vacancy, a mid-level leadership official is temporarily appointed. This provides temporary stability and ensures that governance continues until a new governor is elected and the definitive official is inaugurated.

Meanwhile, paragraph (11) indicates that if the regent or mayor positions are vacant, a senior leader from a school can appoint an interim official for the role, demonstrating flexibility in appointing interim officials. The term "acting person" refers to individuals given the authority to carry out the functions of the vacant position with all the powers held by a permanent regional head. In other words, although their position is temporary, these interim officials possess responsibilities and powers equivalent to those of officially elected officials. This is vital to ensure that regional administration remains unaffected during the transition period and continues to provide necessary services to the community.

Thus, the duties and authorities of the interim officials are equivalent to those of those who are officially elected, as is detailed in Articles 65, paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Regional Government Law, which states that:

1. Leading the implementation of Government Affairs that are the authority of the Region based on the provisions of laws regulations and policies jointly determined by the DPRD;

2. Maintaining public order and security;
3. Preparing and submitting draft Regional Regulations on and draft Regional Regulations on the RPJMD to the DPRD for joint discussion with the DPRD, as well as preparing and determining the RKPD;
4. Preparing and submitting draft Regional Regulations on the APBD, draft Regional Regulations on changes to the APBD, and draft Regional Regulations on accountability for the implementation of the APBD to the DPRD for joint discussion;
5. Representing the Region in and outside the court, and may appoint a legal representative to represent him by the provisions of laws and regulations;
6. Carrying out other duties by the provisions of laws and regulations.

In carrying out the duties as referred to in paragraph (1), the regional head has the authority to:

1. Submit draft Regional Regulations;
2. Stipulating Regional Regulations that have received joint approval from the DPRD;
3. Stipulating Regional Regulations and decisions of the regional head;
4. Taking certain actions in urgent circumstances that are urgently needed by the Region and/or the community;
5. Carrying out other authorities by the provisions of laws and regulations

In addition to the duties and authorities, some obligations must be carried out by the regional head. The obligations of the regional head are stated in Article 67 of the Regional Government Law, which reads:

1. Upholding and practicing Pancasila, implementing the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, and maintaining and preserving the integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia;
2. Complying with all provisions of laws and regulations;
3. Developing a democratic life;
4. Maintaining ethics and norms in the implementation of government affairs that are the authority of the Region;
5. Applying the principles of clean and good governance;
6. Implementing national strategic programs; and
7. Establishing working relationships with all Vertical Agencies in the region and all Regional Apparatus

The prohibitions (limitations of authority) for acting regional heads based on Article 132A paragraph (1) of PP No. 49 of 2008 are:

1. Carrying out employee mutations;
2. Canceling permits issued by previous officials and/or issuing permits that conflict with those issued by previous officials;
3. Making policies on regional expansion that conflict with previous policies; and
4. Making policies that conflict with the government administration policies and development programs of previous officials.

In the explanatory note of Article 19 of Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus, the qualifications for High Leadership Positions (*Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi Madya*) and Primary High Leadership Positions (*Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi Pratama*) are outlined. High Leadership Positions include roles such as Secretary General of the Ministry, Secretary of the Ministry, Director General, and several other equivalent positions. Meanwhile, Primary High Leadership Positions encompass roles such as Directors, Bureau Heads, and other equivalent positions. The Ministry of Home Affairs has regulated the procedures for appointing acting regional heads in Ministerial

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Regulation No. 74 of 2016 and Ministerial Regulation No. 1 of 2018. Both regulations establish the qualifications for interim regional heads based on Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning the Election of Regional Heads.

Referring to Article 1, paragraph 6 of Ministerial Regulation No. 1 of 2018, the minister has the authority to appoint mid-level or high-level officials to fill the positions of governors, vice governors, regents, deputy regents, mayors, and vice mayors. Interim Governors generally come from prominent positions at the federal or provincial government levels, whereas Interim Regents or Mayors are typically proposed by the governor and originate from the ranks of the Ministry of Home Affairs or related departments. Various positions also exist to fill vacancies, such as Daily Executives, Acting Officials, Interim Officials, and Appointed Officials. The explanatory note of Article 19 of Law No. 5 of 2014 outlines the qualifications for High Leadership Positions. High Leadership Positions encompass strategic roles such as Secretary General of the Ministry, Secretary of the Ministry, and Director General, each carrying substantial responsibilities in managing ministries and state institutions. Key High Leadership Positions include roles like Director, Bureau Head, and other equivalent positions across various government sectors. The Ministry of Home Affairs oversees the appointment process for acting regional heads through Ministerial Regulations No. 74 of 2016 and No. 1 of 2018, which outline the criteria for interim regional leaders. These regulations are designed to facilitate the effective filling of regional head positions during vacancies, under the stipulations established by Law No. 10 of 2016 regarding the Election of Regional Heads.

The appointment of acting regional heads aims to ensure continuity in regional governance. These officials hold the responsibility to perform the functions and duties typically assigned to regional heads, such as making strategic decisions and managing government administration. Although these officials operate in a temporary capacity, they must carry out their duties with integrity and avoid actions that may cause controversy or conflicts of interest. The appointment process is crucial, particularly in maintaining the legitimacy of regional governance, as newly elected regional heads are expected to possess a legitimate mandate from the people. Therefore, the appointment of acting regional heads should be conducted with attention to the principles of democracy and justice, ensuring that decisions made during the transitional period do not interfere with the upcoming electoral process.

The legitimacy of the mandate in the context of regional government in Indonesia is critical, as political authority is held by governors, regents, and mayors who directly obtain legitimacy from the electorate. This means that anyone serving as a regional head needs to have the support and mandate of the local community to carry out governmental functions. This mandate serves as the foundation for the legality of actions and decisions made and reinforces public trust in their leaders. In Indonesia's unitary state system, questions arise about how popular sovereignty is manifested. Popular sovereignty means that every political decision must stem from the voices and choices of the people themselves. Therefore, the appointment of regional heads or acting regional heads by the central government without a legitimate electoral process can be considered a violation of this principle. In this context, the legitimacy of regional heads appointed without an election can be questioned, as they do not have a direct mandate from the electorate. The importance of direct elections for regional heads is to ensure that elected leaders genuinely reflect the will of the people. If the central government conducts appointments without a democratic process, this may lead to public dissatisfaction and potential

conflicts between central and regional governments. Thus, clear regulations should be established to govern the filling of regional head positions, to remain in accordance with the principles of democracy and popular sovereignty.

Several considerations underscore the need for the government to issue implementing regulations regarding the mechanism for filling regional head positions during the transitional period of the simultaneous regional elections in 2024. When a regional head resigns or is dismissed for legal reasons, this situation may create a vacancy in regional leadership, especially if there is also a vacancy in the deputy head position. In such cases, an acting regional head will be appointed to perform the duties of both positions. This appointment refers to Law No. 10 of 2016, which emphasizes that acting regional heads are not only to fill a temporary vacancy but are tasked with replacing regional heads whose terms have expired.

The urgency of establishing and implementing regulations related to acting regional heads is paramount, especially considering that there are currently no clear provisions regarding their authority limits. This legal vacuum may jeopardize the stability of regional governance, as acting officials lack strong electoral legitimacy. This can create uncertainty and dissatisfaction among the public, as well as risks regarding the strategic decisions made by these officials. The addition of implementing regulations is expected to provide clear operational guidelines. Thus, the authority and responsibilities of interim regional heads can be clearly defined, thereby reducing the risk of decision-making that exceeds their jurisdiction. These regulations need to include aspects such as limitations on actions that may be taken, types of decisions that require further approval or consultation, and obligations to report the actions taken during their tenure. With a clearer legal framework in place, acting regional heads can perform their duties more effectively and responsibly, maintaining the stability of regional governance until definitive regional head elections are conducted. This will also enhance public trust in the governance process and help ensure the continuity of effective and sustainable public services.

Legal vacuums within regional governments can pose significant challenges for appointed acting regional heads. One of the main obstacles is the uncertainty in executing strategic programs and long-term policies. Acting regional heads often face situations where they must make crucial decisions without clear legal guidelines. This can hinder the implementation of projects requiring long-term planning and investment, as legal uncertainty may lead to doubt in formulating effective policies. Administrative uncertainty can negatively affect public services. Local governments may struggle to prepare and manage budgets, especially for routine and ongoing programs. Without legal certainty, the budgeting process may be hampered, which, in turn, can affect the availability of resources for public projects and services. The public may directly feel the impact of this uncertainty through declining service quality, delays in development projects, or even temporary suspensions of vital services. Furthermore, the repercussions of this legal vacuum can also foster public distrust towards the government. When the public observes uncertainty and the government's inability to perform its functions, it may impact the legitimacy and public confidence in local authorities.

Challenges and Efforts Related to the Mechanism for Filling Temporary Regional Head Positions

The ambiguity surrounding the authority of acting regional heads can lead to several serious issues in the management of regional governance. When the limits of tasks and responsibilities are not clearly defined, acting officials may make decisions that exceed their authority, potentially resulting in legal and administrative conflicts. For example,

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decisions related to strategic policies, budget expenditures, or program implementation could be made without considering long-term impacts or the approval of local legislative bodies. The lack of clarity regarding authority can create uncertainty among civil servants and the public. Civil servants may be confused about the extent of the decisions that can be made by acting officials, which could hinder the implementation of existing programs. The public may also feel uncertain about the policies being implemented, as they do not know the limits of the acting officials' authority and whether the decisions made reflect public interests.

The absence of electoral legitimacy for acting officials can diminish public trust in regional government. When the individuals holding these positions are not elected through democratic processes, such as elections, the public tends to feel skeptical about the decisions made and the policy directions pursued. The sense of involvement and trust in the community diminishes, as they feel they have no voice in the leaders who impact their daily lives. This lack of legitimacy can also create resistance to implemented policies. The public may refuse to support programs or initiatives launched by acting officials, as they feel that these individuals do not represent their aspirations or needs. This can negatively affect policy implementation, ultimately resulting in instability within regional governance.

The legal vacuum in filling regional head positions can disrupt the stability and continuity of regional governance. When acting officials are appointed without clear guidelines regarding their authority, the decisions made may be inconsistent and potentially detrimental to governance. This can create uncertainty among government employees and the public, which, in turn, hinders the implementation of development programs and public services. Such instability can worsen the relationship between the regional government and the community. If the public perceives that the government lacks clear direction and that decisions are made without strong legitimacy, doubts about the effectiveness of governance will arise. This situation can exacerbate social tensions and reduce public participation in governance processes.

Establishing clear implementing regulations is crucial in filling vacant regional head positions. These regulations must detail the tasks and authority limits of acting officials so that they can perform their roles without exceeding the stipulated powers. With clear guidelines in place, acting officials can make more accurate and strategic decisions without generating legal uncertainty. These regulations also serve to enhance the accountability of acting officials. By establishing clear limits, the public and stakeholders can understand the extent of the actions that acting officials may take, helping to mitigate the potential for abuse of power. When the community is aware that regulations govern the behavior of acting officials, their trust in the government may increase. It is also essential to ensure that establishing these implementing regulations involves public participation and related stakeholders. Engaging the community in policy formulation will create a sense of ownership and enhance the legitimacy of the enacted regulations. Therefore, the establishment of implementing regulations will not only provide a clear legal framework but also help build public trust and support for the current administration.

Enhancing transparency in the selection and appointment process of acting regional heads is crucial for building public trust. By disseminating information related to procedures, selection criteria, and decisions made, the public will better understand the process and feel engaged. This transparency should not only include information about who is appointed but also the rationale behind the decisions. Public participation in this process is also vital. Providing opportunities for the community to offer input or

participate in discussion forums will increase the legitimacy of the appointed officials. When the public feels that their voices are heard and considered, they are more likely to support the decisions made. High levels of transparency and participation can create a more democratic governance atmosphere, where the community feels they have control over the governance process. It can also prevent practices of corruption and abuse of power since open processes tend to reduce opportunities for unethical behavior. Thus, improving transparency and participation can contribute to the stability and effectiveness of regional governance.

Training and mentoring for acting regional heads are essential to ensure they can perform their duties effectively and in compliance with applicable legal provisions. The training can cover various aspects, ranging from understanding legislation, and regional government management, to strategic decision-making. By understanding their responsibilities and rights, acting officials can avoid potential abuses of power. Mentorship from experts or mentors can also provide the practical support needed to face challenges in performing their tasks. Through this guidance, acting officials can learn from the experiences of others, receive feedback, and leverage available resources to achieve better governance outcomes. Therefore, these training and mentoring efforts will enhance the capacity of acting officials in managing governance and delivering optimal services to the public.

CONCLUSION

The appointment of an interim official to fill a vacant regional head position is crucial for maintaining the continuity of government and public services, particularly during the regional head election process. However, significant challenges arise from the legal vacuum that can impede the effectiveness and legitimacy of these interim officials. This often results in uncertainty in strategic decision-making and negatively impacts public services. Thus, it is essential to establish clear implementing regulations that delineate the limits of authority and responsibility for interim officials, facilitating a seamless transition to a definitive regional head election. The ambiguity surrounding the authority of interim regional head officials can lead to serious issues in regional government management. These include potential abuse of power, confusion among civil servants and the community, and a loss of legitimacy and public trust. To address these challenges, it is vital to create clear implementing regulations that specify the duties and authority of interim officials. Additionally, enhancing transparency and encouraging public participation in the election process are necessary steps. Providing training and mentoring for interim officials is equally important, ensuring they can perform their roles effectively and in compliance with legal provisions, thus preserving the stability and effectiveness of regional government.

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