

30 JULY 2001

Parliament-Constitution

RAIS TABLES CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

KUALA LUMPUR, July 30 (Bernama) -- Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Rais Yatim today tabled the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2001 aimed, among others, at inserting the word sex in Article 8 to prevent sexual discrimination.

The bill was tabled for the first reading in the Dewan Rakyat and is expected to be tabled for second reading and debated on tomorrow.

Article 8 of the Federal Constitution states that there shall be no discrimination against citizens on the grounds of religion, race, ancestry and place of birth except where allowed by the constitution.

The proposed amendment is to add the word sex to the grounds.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said recently that the amendment was to ensure that women received equal rights as men, as citizens.

The bill also provides that in the event a senator dies or stops holding the post before the end of his tenure, his successor can only hold the post for the remainder of the tenure.

The proposed amendments also provide for the posts of Deputy President of the Dewan Negara and the Deputy Speaker of the Dewan Rakyat to be full-time posts in view of the increasing workload.

Article 114 Clause (1) of the Federal Constitution is also to be amended to increase the number of Election Commission (EC) members from three now to five ordinary members, besides the chairman and deputy chairman.

The proposed amendments will involve an additional expenditure for the government which has yet to be quantified.

-- BERNAMA

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