

**Proxy-voting to add to BN's arsenal against Pakatan?**  
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Opposition party leaders today condemned the Election Commission's (EC) proposal to implement a proxy-voting system as one that they suspect will only serve the interests of BN.

In a speech at DAP's internal national-level election workshop, party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng (left) expressed "shock" over the proposal and said DAP would oppose it for the prospect of "opening up another avenue of abuse for the well-equipped BN to exploit".

"Based on BN's abysmal record in perverting the clean conduct of the electoral process and EC's atrocious failure to monitor and ensure compliance, there are serious concerns that proxy voting will only serve to 'legitimatised' the practice of employing phantom voters," he said.

"When proxy voting is permitted, we cannot be sure that either the proxies are genuine or that the voters they purport to represent are genuine.

"Furthermore, proxy voting can only encourage vote-buying... Allowing proxy voting will only add on to BN's arsenal of weapons against Pakatan to defend Putrajaya at all costs."

EC chairperson Abdul Aziz Mohd Yusof (right) recently said the proposed system is aimed at empowering individuals to cast ballots on behalf of registered voters unable to do so themselves at designated voting stations.

The proposal is one of 30 proposed amendments to election laws that the commission hopes to table during the next parliamentary sitting in March.

Questioning the EC's failure to consult and obtain feedback from both the public and Pakatan Rakyat on the matter, Lim said the proxy-voting if implemented "may well cripple or even strike a possibly fatal blow to Pakatan's general election campaign and hopes of victory".

"If EC is sincere (in empowering voters), why then did EC not sanction Malaysians living overseas to register and vote in our foreign missions?" Lim asked further.

Citing the EC's previous rejection of complaints of BN use of '3M' (money politics, media control and misuse of government machinery) over the opposition, Lim said the public has no confidence that the EC will act if reports of abuse in the proxy voting system are raised.

Lim said the party will also direct its top leaders to meet with the EC to register their objections "in the strongest possible terms" against the proxy-voting proposal and other proposals announced.

"Are these and the proxy-voting system the newest strategy by EC to assist BN to defend Putrajaya at all costs and win the 13th general election?"

"By revealing as many 30 proposed changes without first discussing with opposition parties

indicates that the EC wants to surprise and handicap PR who may not have the time, manpower and resources to cope with the latest changes.

"How then can EC be trusted as a credible body that is free, fair, neutral and independent in conducting elections?"

"Without proper consultation and feedback from both the public and Pakatan the latest strategy which may well cripple or even strike a possibly fatal blow to Pakatan's general election campaign and hopes of victory."

### **'Fix what's broken'**

Also condemning the EC proposal was PAS Youth, whose election director Mohd Firdaus Jaafar said the EC has yet to clarify how the so-called 'proxies' would be chosen.

Even if the system were to be implemented under close supervision, said Firdaus, how could it be ensured that dishonest proxies are prevented from casting votes contrary to the wishes of those they represent?

"PAS Youth would like to remind the EC to carry out the election process that we already have, transparently and fairly. Proposing this new system will not improve the system in place and will not restore the public's confidence in the election system in Malaysia," said Firdaus.

"PAS Youth also urges that EC does not intervene in the political battle between Pakatan and BN. Let the 13th general election be held in calm and peace. Don't try to throw a lifeline to BN just because it is in its dying moments. The people will not be fooled any longer."