

Section 15 of UUCA not needed, says MCA Youth
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MCA Youth welcomed the Court of Appeal's decision this morning which declared Section 15 of the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA) as "unconstitutional".

"We welcome the decision. This is consistent with MCA Youth's stand that the section is not needed and has no place in the UUCA," its chief, Wee Ka Siong, told reporters when met at Parliament today.

NONEWee (right) stressed that the right of students to express their political affiliations is a universal principle that MCA Youth and BN's Youth wing have long championed.

"They are all 21. When they reach 21 they are all eligible to vote," he said

As such, students should be free to have their political views known and align themselves to whichever party they believe in.

Quizzed if he was going to dissuade the Higher Education Ministry from appealing against the court decision, he said that it is the right of the ministry to do so.

Meanwhile in an immediate response, DAP Socialist Youth chief Anthony Loke, while welcoming today's Court of Appeal decision, also attacked MCA Youth and Wee for what he described as its hypocrisy regarding the party's stand on UUCA.

"We welcome the Court of Appeal's decision. This is a moral victory to the rise of university student power which had for a long time called for the repeal of UUCA. We commend the four students for bringing this case to court and with the court arriving to its decision today. Their bravery and chivalry is commended," Loke said.

"We also support Gamis' call for UUCA to be repealed like the Internal Security Act, as full autonomy and freedom should be given to academics at university. The UUCA has long curtailed university students' thinking and curbed their critical thinking in public institutions of higher learning."

NONETraining his sights on Wee, Loke (left) said during the amendment to the UUCA which was tabled in 2008, there were no MPs from MCA who had fought for Section 15 to be repeal.

"In fact, when Pakatan Rakyat MPs proposed for Section 15 to be repealed at the committee stage, all BN MPs, including from MCA, opposed it. Wee's statement today shows MCA Youth's hypocrisy in welcoming today's decision.

"DAP Socialist Youth will continue to fight for the repealment of UUCA and we will continue to support university students seeking the removal of its legislation. The UUCA's repeal is an agenda of Pakatan Rakyat. DAP Socialist Youth will certainly continue to fight and annul this legislation if we win the next general election and form the new government," he said.

Ministry mulling an appeal

The Higher Education Ministry is mulling an appeal over the appellate court's decision.

The ministry is waiting for the written judgment, which it shall study and later may appeal, its minister Khaled Nordin told the House today when winding up for the Higher Education Ministry during the policy stage of the 2012 Budget debate.

His response came immediately after the court decision announced this morning in Putrajaya.

In the case, four students from UKM, popularly dubbed the 'UKM4', challenged the constitutionality of Section 15 (5) of the UUCA, which provides for public universities to take action against their students involved in politics.

The four political science majors were picked up while allegedly on the campaign trail with an opposition party during the Hulu Selangor by-election.

The university had levelled charges against them under the same section of the Act for allegedly having political affiliations.

The four contended that they were at the election trail as observers.

The court decision may open the floodgates for students to challenge a long-standing ban on students from being active politically, something which the ministry may be moving to pre-empt.

Decisions handed down by the courts which go against the interests of the government are often overturned during later appeals.

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