

MP under fire over single school system proposal
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Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin is under fire from both sides of the political divide over his proposal of a new social contract which include the abolition of vernacular schools.

The proposal was raised in his column on The Edge Financial Daily last month and raised during his speech at a conference on national unity.

Khairy said children are segregated by race with a parallel schooling system and thus proposed a single school system which would provide mother tongue education.

He said his new social contract idea includes the rolling back of certain bumiputera quotas and that for this idea to take shape, it should be done through a referendum.

His speech was heavily covered by the Chinese dailies, with MCA Youth chief Wee Ka Siong offering the strongest opposition towards the proposal.

"Vernacular school is guaranteed under the Federal Constitution. Mother tongue education is our strength. Don't ever think of abolishing it.

"Single stream school doesn't guarantee national unity. Don't anyhow blame vernacular school as a hindrance to national unity," Wee, who is also the Deputy Education Minister said on Twitter.

Referendum - Tyranny of the majority

On the Pakatan Rakyat front, DAP Chinese education bureau head Chong Eng stressed that the proposed new social contract must in accordance with the Federal Constitution which protects the rights of all ethnic groups including the rights to mother tongue education.

In a statement issued today, she added that such basic rights cannot be denied through a referendum or the tyranny of majority.

"In a nutshell, public affairs can be decided through referendum but not the basic rights of ethnic groups.

"Referendum is indeed a reflection of direct democracy but Malaysia practices representative democracy hence the feasibility of referendum must be studied carefully."

The Bukit Mertajam MP cautioned that referendum could lead to tyranny of majority, populism, division among the people and manipulation by irresponsible politicians.

Wither true 1Malaysia?

Dong Jiao Zong, the umbrella group of Chinese educationist, expressed regret on Khairy's proposal, stressing that the current multi-lingual education system is the best choice for Malaysia's multi-ethnic society.

The organisation pointed out that the biggest problem faced by our country is the implementation of monistic and unfair policies in education, culture and economy which leads to discrimination against different ethnic groups.

"Dong Jiao Zong is of the view that only by allowing all ethnic groups to enjoy equality and use it as the principle of all policies, we can address the root cause," said a statement released by the organisation today.

It said that the government can right ethnic relations by overhauling economic policies, in particularly, those which are bumiputera-centric, and implement a holistic and meaningful 1Malaysia policy.

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