

Kit Siang: Najib must recall feedlot loan
Malaysiakini.com
November 13 ,2011

Former MCA president Ong Tee Keat has slammed his party leaders over their objections to extending the postal votes to all Malaysians overseas, saying MCA has not learned the lessons of being out of sync with the electorate.

In a statement, the Pandan Member of Parliament took aim at MCA president Dr Chua Soi Lek for saying yesterday that Malaysians residing overseas should not be allowed to vote as they are "out of touch" with the real situation in the country and may rely on "doubtful, biased and wrong" information.

Expressing amusement that Chua would suggest only those residing within Malaysia would know best the track record of candidates contesting in the various constituents, Ong asked whether this referred to politicians' handling of local issues such as drain clogs and garbage collection problems.

These are, after all, the constituency services that give many aspiring candidates and serving politicians media coverage.

"If so, does it mean that is the only yardstick for assessing a contesting candidate in a general election?" asked Ong.

MCA's proposal to disallow voting for Malaysians residing overseas was made to the parliamentary select committee on electoral reforms. Chua later clarified that it is also because allowing these people to vote will pose a logistical challenge.

The logic of logistics

Ong, however, maintained that going by the proposal's logic, he could not be sure if the news from sources of media other than the party-controlled organs and the mainstream media would be touted as 'disinformation' despite being a resident on Malaysian soil.

"By the same argument as was espoused by MCA, I would also risk losing my voting right.

"On the same rein, those voters who hardly read any political news due to their level of literacy or individual preference would certainly be deemed 'out of sync' with domestic politics, thus 'disqualifying' themselves from voting in the general election," said Ong (left).

On the argument of logistics, furthermore, Ong said while technicalities are a concern, it is not impossible nor unprecedented in parliamentary democracies to arrange for citizens overseas to vote.

But that's the concern of the Election Commission (EC) to worry about, not the MCA, said Ong.

"To shun postal voting on the pretext of averting logistics difficulties is no excuse for denying the constitutional rights of the overseas Malaysians.

"This has reminded me of the same excuse argued in delaying and frustrating the MCA annual general assembly's resolution in implementing the direct election of party presidency as well as all key party posts during my tenure as the MCA president," he added.

'Given the benefits of hindsight, perhaps lack of self-confidence is the only likely justification for such a stance that clearly runs in contrary to the spirit of upholding the citizens' constitutional rights.

"Nonetheless, this is unethical and unbecoming of any political parties which claim to champion the people's rights.

"To me, the real test to such political commitment lies in ones' courage and preparedness in defending the rights of those who are likely to vote against us," said Ong.

Copyright © 1999-2011 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd
<http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/181243>