Private life of MP no grounds for impeachment
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By Hazlan Zakaria

What happens in the private life of an MP cannot be grounds for his or her impeachment, says a Dewan Rakyat deputy speaker.

"His or her private life cannot be used (as grounds for moving for impeachment). It is different if it is a criminal offence or he (she) has betrayed the country," deputy speaker Wan Junaidy Jaafar told reporters in the Parliament lobby today.

He also explained that existing examples of MPs being censured by the House involved cases where they did something improper inside the Dewan or on its grounds, not incidents outside or in the private life of individuals.

parliament house leak leakage 050508 wan junaidiWan Junaidy (left) was responding to reports that a group of senators and MPs opposed to Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim was planning to table a motion in Parliament to impeach the Permatang Pauh parliamentarian.

He told reporters that there were no provisions in the parliamentary standing orders, the laws of Malaysia and the federal constitution for an MP to be impeached.

It is up to the discretion of the speaker to accept or reject a Private Member's Bill or a motion to debate such a matter in the House.

However, Wan Junaidy argued, even if such a motion or Bill is passed, removing an MP from office has to be based on legal provisions that allow this to be done.

This, he said, would require an MP to be charged in court, found guilty and then sentenced. Even then, the matter must be still debated by the House again and removal from the parliamentarian's seat is not automatic.

Meanwhile, PKR vice-president Tian Chua called the idea to impeach Anwar "stupid".

Met by reporters in parliament, he ridiculed the suggestion from Shafee Abdullah, lawyer to Anwar's former tennis partner turned bitter rival Senator S Nallakaruppan.

"There is no such thing here. We have a no-confidence vote, but that is for the PM. There is no such thing for MPs.

"Impeachment only exists in the US, and even then specifically for the president," he added.

Nallakaruppan's lawyer had said that he was looking at ways to move for Anwar's impeachment and removal from parliament.

The senator had made allegations on Anwar's sexuality, which had caused the Opposition Leader to slap him with an RM100 million lawsuit.

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