

**PTPTN: Why rally, just vote, Khaled tells students**  
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**By Nigel Aw**

Higher Education Minister Khaled Nordin today told students advocating the abolition of PTPTN loans not to take to the streets but to state their case at the ballot box instead.

"What do they want to demonstrate for? We are going to have a general election.

"If there is any party that wants to abolish PTPTN without giving out any loans, they can choose that party in the general election, the time is already very near," Khaled said when approached after an education fair in Kuala Lumpur this afternoon.

Student group Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM) last Friday threatened to rally on Apr 14 for the abolition of PTPTN and a waiver of all outstanding loans.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has said that if Pakatan Rakyat comes to power, it will waive the loans and provide free education, but has not provided any detailed plans.

Khaled however argued that the PTPTN loan is mostly to cover daily expenses and free education will not remove the need for the loan.

Presently, he said, tertiary education in local varsities is already affordable as it is heavily subsidised by the government.

"The loan is for the daily expenses, not the fees, the fees are already very cheap, if there is no PTPTN who is going to pay for their food?" he said.

PTPTN allocations up

In his speech earlier, Khaled said cabinet yesterday approved an additional RM6 billion for the PTPTN loan fund from 2012 to 2013.

This is part of the higher education ministry's proposal to add an additional RM16.5 billion to the loan fund from 2012 to 2015.

As of Feb 29, a total of 1.9 million students have taken a loan with PTPTN totalling RM43.6 billion.



