

DAP gears up to fight for equitable redelineation

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By Koh Jun Lin

DAP will set up its parliamentary committee to study issues regarding the redelineation of constituencies, in anticipation of the upcoming exercise by the Election Commission (EC).

Parliamentary leader Lim Kit Siang announced at a press conference today that the committee will be headed by its election strategist Ong Kian Ming.

dap special meeting 110313 lim kit siang 2“(The committee will) study the redelineation of constituencies and make proposals to ensure the principle of ‘one man, one vote, one value’ is embedded in this redelineation.

“We don’t want a situation where the government of the day gets 47 percent of the popular support while the opposition coalition gets 51 percent, which is completely undemocratic and unfair,” he said, referring to the results of last week’s general election.

The election marks the first time BN has lost the popular vote, while ironically retaining control of the government by winning 133 parliamentary seats to Pakatan Rakyat’s 89.

The disparity between the popular vote and seats won has been blamed on malapportionment and gerrymandering.

Lim said the exercise is likely to see an increase the number of constituencies because the number of voters have increased.

However, changing the number of constituencies would need the approval of two-thirds of the Dewan Rakyat, therefore the EC will have to engage with Pakatan Rakyat on the matter.

‘Variance should be under 50%’

To a question, Lim said the variance between the population of the largest and smallest constituencies should ideally be less than 50 percent, to take into account of the sparse population in rural areas.

NONEThis contrasts with the current disparity where the largest constituency,

Kapar, Selangor has nine times more voters than the smallest constituency of Putrajaya.

He noted that Malaysia's federal constitution originally stipulated a deviation between constituencies of no more than 15 percent.

The government of the day later amended the constitution to change the limit to 50 percent, and then had the cap removed altogether.

Ong (above), who is the Serdang MP and a political scientist by training, is joined by six others on the committee: Bukit Bendera MP Zairil Khir Johari, Raub MP Mohd Ariff Sabri Abdul Aziz, Batu Gajah MP V Sivakumar, Kulai MP Teo Nie Ching, Kota Kinabalu MP Wong Sze Phin, and Bandar Kuching MP Chong Chieng Jen.

In addition, Lim said the DAP state liaison committees will form similar committees at the state level and send a representative to the national-level committee.

He said he will rope in the party's coalition allies PKR and PAS in the effort as well.

According to the EC, the redelineation exercise will commence at the end of the year after the court resolves any election petitions that may arise from the recent general election.

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