

## **PKR launches survey of PTPTN borrowers**

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**By Koh Jun Lin**

PKR is launching a preliminary survey on National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) borrowers to understand the causes of the fund's ballooning debt.

The party's director of strategy Rafizi Ramli told a press conference today that findings of the survey would be presented in a 'Tweetup' on Aug 29 at 8.30pm at the Petaling Jaya City Council library, which will also be used to organise an anti-PTPTN lobby group.

"It is time for PTPTN borrowers to form an influential lobby where any party needs to negotiate with them first before making any proposals to avoid a repeat of the suggestion to list (PTPTN defaulters) on the Central Credit Reference Information System (CCRIS)," he said.

A tweetup is an informal meet-up organised primarily through the microblogging service Twitter. However, Rafizi said part of the discussions for his presentation would be conducted on Twitter as well as at the library.

The online survey is conducted on the website <http://siasatptptn.wordpress.com>, and collects information such as education background, economic background, and how well the respondent has been able to service their PTPTN loans.

Rafizi said he hoped that he would be able to gather at least 1,000 responses ahead of his presentation in order to have adequate data to work on, and hopes PTPTN borrowers and anti-PTPTN groups would join the tweetup as well.

Government 'out-of-touch'

Commenting on the recent proposal to list PTPTN defaulters on the CCRIS, he said it shows that the government is 'out-of-touch' with the people and said the government should conduct a study on why PTPTN borrowers default.

He said part of the reason he wanted to do the survey - in addition to pioneering the study while waiting for the government's response - was that the government has never announced data that is crucial in understanding the problem.

These include information regarding income, whether graduates are holding jobs that they are over-qualified for, the time it took them to secure a position suited for

degree-holders, and how many ended up with degrees that are not recognised.

Another reason, he said, is that he had received many anecdotes of graduates struggling to service their loans and some felt cheated when they could not secure the jobs that they were promised when they signed up for tertiary education.

"BN has never been interested in understanding the issue of youth debt and takes the blunt approach of supposing that all PTPTN borrowers who are facing problems are ungrateful and irresponsible.

"PKR urges (Education Minister II) Idris Jusoh (who mooted the idea of listing PTPTN defaulters on CCRIS) not to announce new measures to pressure PTPTN borrowers until this information is studied fully and presented in parliament," he said.

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