

Tee Keat: Is MCA bereft of winnable candidates?
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Former MCA president Ong Tee Keat has asked if the party has run out of viable candidates to stand in the Bukit Gelugor by-election.

Calling the bluff on the party's excuse of wanting to focus on its fight against hudud law, Ong said that has never been an impediment to running for election.

Ong (below), in a statement today, said the hudud issue "has never been a seasonal initiative" but a "continuous party commitment" irrespective of elections.

"It does not hamper the party from contesting in the Bukit Gelugor by-election," he said.

Noting how MCA had in the past played the hudud card successfully to weaken electoral support of the PAS-DAP pairing, it should fare even better now.

"Now that MCA is on the issue again with much gusto and publicity, I see no reason for fear of contesting on the part of MCA.

"Its 'no-contest' decision would only leave room for scepticism that the party is now exhausted of winnable candidates," said Ong.

The 'true reason' for backing out

Yesterday, hours after DAP unveiled its candidate Ramkarpal Singh for the seat vacated after his father passed away in a tragic road accident last month, MCA announced it will not be fielding any candidate.

Ong said taking up the Bukit Gelugor challenge would have been a good test of MCA's traction with the Chinese community.

"More so after having kickstarted the party's transformation pledge and the recent posturing of opposing the hudud implementation," he said, referring to new chairperson Liow Tiong Lai's inaugural manifesto after being elected in.

Meanwhile, DAP vice-president Teresa Kok (right) said that the MCA's claim that it is backing out to concentrate on the hudud was a farce.

The "true reason", she said, is that MCA "is afraid of a disastrous defeat which will make it hard to justify its rejoining the cabinet".

She added that MCA also lost an opportunity to take on the DAP after incessantly attacking the opposition party with “falsehoods and lies” over the hudud controversy.

In a statement, she also urged MCA not to use Karpal's name in vain by telling its grassroots that it is backing out of the race in Karpal's honour.

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