

Jumat backs GST but wants healthcare review

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Even though Umno's Jumat Idris took to Facebook to complain about a hefty Goods and Services Tax (GST) he had to pay, the Sepanggar MP said he has no regrets voting for implementation of the tax.

Jumat said his grouse was with regards to the finer details of the implementation, and in his case, the tax being imposed at every stage in the private healthcare system.

"I don't regret (voting for it) but I am talking about the system," he told Malaysiakini when contacted.

Jumat in a Facebook posting last week complained he had to fork out RM1,200 in GST for his daughter's medical treatment on top of also paying the tax for consultation.

"During registration it is six percent then consultation fee is another six percent, and as my daughter was admitted and needed medicine, even the medicine was also taxed at six percent.

"That is already three times so it's multiple taxation," he said although noting in other cases, some medicine may be zero-rated for GST.

He added other patients or next-of-kin had similar complaints when he was queueing to pay his bill at the private hospital concerned.

"As an MP, I have been telling people through more than 30 ceramah so far that GST is the best but now I also kena (got stung by it).

Jumat said he believed that being taxed once for GST would suffice for consumers and hoped the Customs Department and Ministry of Domestic Trade,

Cooperative and Consumerism Ministry could meet private healthcare providers to sort out whether they should be charging GST at every tier.

On Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan's suggestion that those cannot afford private hospital should go to a public hospital instead, Jumat said the issue was the multiple GST tax and not the fees charged by private hospitals.

'Public hospital not always option'

Furthermore, he noted that not everybody could go to a public hospital as in the case of his daughter who needed specialist treatment.

"I would like to go to government hospital because as an MP the bill is covered by the government."

"But my daughter is ill and she needed a specialist. There is no neurology specialist at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu which is a public hospital," he said.

Jumat's 13-year-old daughter is a gymnast who suffered a curved spine and subsequently contracted a nerve infection.

"She couldn't even walk or feel any pain when you pinched her," he said, adding that with treatment and therapy, his daughter is able to take a few steps now.

As a whole, Jumat said he remains supportive of GST but stressed the implementation kinks must be ironed out.

"GST is supposed to be the best among all such tax systems because it is used in many countries.

"There is no complaint from Singapore and Indonesia (which are using GST).

"So I think the system is okay but how we enforce it is another question," he said.