

Najib's austerity budget like giving painkillers for cancer

MalaysiaKini.com

Oct 24th, 2015

Bukit Mertajam MP Steven Sim has described Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's Budget 2016 as an "austerity budget" as it saw heavy cuts in several key sectors.

Sim pointed out the cuts include areas of higher education, skills development, industry development, public transport, welfare, women's health and youth.

"Giving handouts and temporary tax cut measures while cutting down spending on structural components that will affect the lives of ordinary Malaysians, is akin to giving painkillers to a cancer patient while denying him cancer treatment," he said in a statement today.

Sim outlined some of the key cuts:

1. RM2.4 billion cut to the Ministry of Higher Education with resources to all public varsities reduced by RM1.4 billion
2. Budget for the Skill Development Fund Corporation under the Human Resource Ministry, which provides skills training loans was slashed by 67 percent from RM15.3 million to RM5 billion.
3. Budget to enforce labour law, deal with workers' complaints and assist in job search slashed by RM14 million or 14 percent nationally.
4. Key support agencies such as Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida), MPC, Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), and SME Corp under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry received a collective cut of RM104.8 million
5. Youth development and youth economic development budget reduced by 28 percent and 24 percent respectively.
6. Complete de-funding for human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination and mammogram programmes for women.

'More for me, less for you'

Sim acknowledged that at a time when the government and Malaysians have "maxed out their credit card", fiscal discipline is required.

"However, in any austerity measure, prioritising is crucial.

"Yet the 2016 Budget only demonstrates the prime minister's continual apathy towards the

sufferings of ordinary Malaysians and the future of our country; he gave himself a bigger share while he cuts our lifeline.

"This is outright atrocious.

"Thus, once again, I call on my fellow MPs to do our duty for all Malaysians, vote down this budget to express our no-confidence against the prime minister to lead this country any further," he said.

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