

## **Is EC hindering Pakatan from registering voters?**

**Malaysiakini.com**

**July 10, 2010**

DAP's efforts to register new voters continue to be hampered by the Election Commission's (EC) refusal to provide more forms, Selangor deputy chairman Tony Pua complained today in a media statement.

He questioned why the EC should hoard the forms when they should be freely available to the public, especially since there are many who have to yet register as voters.

He said despite his complaint to the press on June 16 that their appointed registrars are facing numerous difficulties in obtaining the voter registration forms from the Selangor EC office, the situation has not improved, said Pua (left), who is also Petaling Jaya Utara MP.

Instead, the EC had been trotting out excuse after excuse while allegedly continuing to stinge on forms to the opposition party.

"In early June ... some of our assistant registrars had to leave the EC office empty-handed, due to lack of forms.

"Even when they were able to obtain forms, there were limited to 50 to a maximum of 100 forms, which becomes a major hassle for some of our active registrars, who may register more than 200 - 300 new voters a week," said Pua.

Pua said the EC's excuse was a "shortage of forms" as they only allocated "1,000 forms for all political parties for the month of June".

"We had found this to be extremely unreasonable, as our counterparts in many of the other states do not face any of these problems," he added.

EC: DAP has plenty

Yesterday, Bernama reported the Selangor election director Dzulkifli Abdul Rahman saying that from January to June this year, they had given the DAP 11,150 voter registration forms.

azlan"However, the DAP has only returned 8,733 forms (78.3 percent) which means 2,417 forms (21.7 percent) are still with the party," Dzulkifli was quoted as saying.

Dzulkifli concluded that the statistics showed that there was no such thing as a shortage of forms for the first six months of the year where the DAP was concerned.

Pua refuted the claim ,saying that the statistics provided were misleading for several reasons.

He said with 22 assistant registrars in Selangor, the 2,417 forms in excess average less than 110 forms per registrar, which is unreasonable as registrars need to have sufficient blank forms on hand for continued registration, plus the figures do not take into account completed forms that are still in process of being dispatched to the EC.

He also said the statistics do not take into consideration spoilage from wrongly-filled forms, and rejected forms for cases of double-registration that may happen.

Pua said his registrars conduct stringent checks on submitted forms to weed these out, resulting in their rejection rate being the "lowest among all political parties at only 8 percent".

He ,therefore, said the EC's claim that DAP has abundant forms was "completely inaccurate".

Deaf to complaints

Pua then asked why Dzul kifli failed to answer questions posed to the Selangor EC earlier.

For one, he criticised a lack of response to their complaints in June that their assistant registrars were not given new forms.

He also blasted the EC's policy of restricting access to forms to 100 at any one time, even as a major campaign to register voters was being organised, and their claims of possible abuse as a reason.

"Why should these forms be restricted when there is no room for abuse, and that they are to be given free in the first place?" asked Pua.

The EC has also dragged its feet in approving replacements assistant registrars submitted at the end of 2009, says Pua.

He said this was illogical, since they had "more than 780,000 yet-to-be registered voters in Selangor", adding that the EC has also not acted to appoint more political party assistant registrars as earlier promised.

Pua questioned why the EC is giving excuses and inconveniencing Pakatan assistant registrars from carrying out the task to engage as many Malaysians as possible to exercise their constitutional right of voting.

"The efforts of political parties to register voters, given the EC and the government's refusal to automatically register voters, must instead be appreciated, and given all the necessary encouragement as we are doing the work on behalf of the Election Commission," said Pua.

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