

**Pua: Letters of support must go
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DAP parliamentarian Tony Pua has backed a suggestion by Idris Jala, a minister in the Prime Minister's Department, to stop politicians from issuing letters of support to contractors.

NONEPua stressed that Idris, who is tasked with overseeing the key performance index, is on the right track in trying to end endorsements by ministers or members of parliament.

"Such letters create leakages and wastage in government expenditure as our civil servants are put in the uncomfortable position of having to please the 'big shots', despite it possibly not being in the best interests of the government," said Pua.

It was reported yesterday that the members of the BN Backbenchers Club are contemplating signing a petition to protest the suggestion, as well as to express dissatisfaction with Idris' performance as a minister.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz was quoted as saying today that the issuance of support letters is an age-old practice.

Pua blasted those who have criticised Idris, saying they have displayed "a complete lack of political will to change and to fight corruption (which) is one of the biggest ills plaguing the country".

NONEIdris (right) had mentioned his objective at the Second Annual Corporate Governance Summit 2010 last week, saying that "the recommendation letters should not put undue pressure to bypass the policy of procurement".

Argued Pua, who is Petaling Jaya Utara MP: "Idris did not call for the elimination of letters of appeal in support of constituents who are possibly in need of help and assistance from the government.

"Very clearly he was calling for a stop to the practice by the Barisan MPs and leaders who issue support letters rampantly for politically-connected contractors to secure lucrative contracts with the government."

'Show commitment'

If the government does not heed the advice, he said, the practice would encourage corruption and political kickbacks for politicians and ministers who issue such letters, which he described as being "worth more than their weight in gold".

chan kong choy 131108tiong king singA clear case of misuse, said Pua citing an example, was a letter of support issued by former transport minister Chan Kong Choy (left) to Kuala Dimensi Sdn Bhd (KDSB), a company under the patronage of Bintulu BN parliamentarian Tiong King Sing (right).

"(The letter) resulted in the government having to bear the burden of guaranteeing the RM3.6 billion of loans issued to KDSB," said Pua.

He urged the government to stop such practices for procurement contracts to demonstrate its commitment to the war against corruption.

“(Otherwise) all the beautiful text written in the government transformation programme would be pure rhetoric, proving that BN has no ability to change.”

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