

**Bar Council gives thumbs-up to FOI law**  
**Malaysiakini.com**  
**July 16, 2010**

The Bar Council today applauded the Selangor state government for its much-awaited move in tabling the Freedom of Information bill, but criticised parts of the proposed law as "weak".

"The bill includes many considerations that are still protective of the state government's right to effective formulation or development of policy away from public scrutiny," said Bar Council vice-president Lim Chee Wee.

The council also welcomed the one-year public consultative process that will be conducted by the state, including the establishment of a select committee comprising cross-party representatives, to gather feedback on the FOI for amendments, where necessary, before it is enacted.

"This will enable feedback to be gathered on the bill and we trust that the pro-openness provisions will replace the pro-state government protective features in the bill," Lim said.

Follow suit, federal government urged

Transparency International Malaysia (TI-M) also commended the Selangor government for moving to pass the FOI legislation.

pkfz port klang ong tee keat lee hwa beng paul low seng kuan pc 100609 01In a statement yesterday, TI-M president Paul Low (right) described the proposed law as a crucial component of the national integrity system to promote transparency, accountability and integrity.

"TI-M calls on the federal government and all other states to similarly enact legislation to acknowledge the people's right to information while protecting truly sensitive information. However, such protection has to be justified, instead of being automatic.

"We also call on the Federal government to repeal, or at the minimum, to revamp the scope of the Official Secrets Act," Low said.

The FOI Enactment was tabled for its first reading in the Selangor state assembly on July 14.

The state has described the bill as a move to 'enhance disclosure of information for the public interest, to provide every individual an opportunity to access information made by every department of the state government'.

The bill seeks to create the post of one information officer for each state department to assist members of the public in accessing the documents they are seeking.

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.  
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/137491>