

**Selangor gov't to stamp out support letters**  
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The Selangor government is attempting to put a stop to the use of support letters, but conceded that it cannot be eliminated entirely. It says that it can, at best, discourage the use of such letters especially in obtaining business contracts and jobs from the government.

NONEMenteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim (centre, in picture) has therefore called on all exco members, lawmakers and municipal councillors to stop issuing support letters to those applying for contracts from the various state government agencies.

"We believe that the support letters for individuals or companies to secure contracts will cause a conflict of interest, as well as erode the public's trust in the state government," he said.

However, he gave the green light to support letters asking for assistance for the welfare of their constituents.

"If their constituents come to the lawmakers asking them for help in getting elevators in their low-cost flats repaired, or that they need help getting their deserving child a place in university, these letters are in fact welcomed," Khalid told reporters after chairing the weekly exco meeting in Shah Alam this afternoon.

He said that his administration will also soon issue circulars to the various state government agencies and local councils not to entertain such letters.

He will also instruct all mayors and heads of local councils to compile the support letters collected so far for audit by the state government.

'Not good PR'

But Khalid has stopped short of completely doing away with support letters, as he says it would send the wrong message to the grassroots.

"We can only advise the leaders not to do it. Because (if we stopped the practice outright) the public will think that the MB does not want to support them.

khairy jamaluddin kj interview 190310"Imagine if some people were to come all the way to your office 36km away from their homes, and you say 'no'. It will be bad for public relations and disastrous in politics. So we want to let them feel comfortable," he said.

His sentiments echoed many politicians, including Umno Youth chief Khairy Jamaluddin (left), who think that the chief secretary to the government's directive earlier this week to bar support letters is impractical.

The issue of support letters first hit the limelight when investigations into the Port Klang Free Zone revealed that letters issued by former transport minister Chan Kong Choy were used to secure private funding for the project.

The issue of support letters resurfaced this week when Star alleged that a DAP Klang municipal councillor had used them to secure contracts for his cronies.

The said councillor, Tee Boon Hock, vehemently denied the allegations at a press conference this morning.

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