

## **Teachers in politics a very bad idea**

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The announcement by the Chief Secretary to the Government Mohd Sidek Hassan that graduate teachers on grades DG41 to DG 48 can soon take part in active politics is not a good idea for the long term development of education in this country.

The reasoning by the prime minister that teachers are knowledgeable and command respect among communities and could bring ethics to the political landscape is an idealistic statement, but in reality demonstrates that not all teachers enter the teaching profession with this ideals.

Quite a number of teachers enter the teaching professions due to job security, their inability to obtain a job in the private sector and for the comfort such as school holidays. In fact, the government should engage in fact-finding to determine the truth and a balanced view before coming up with this policy because it is inter-related to the current debate on teachers entering politics.

The teaching profession should be seen within a professional context that takes a broad view of the human development of our children where the sole purpose is to help and facilitate the creation of an outstanding students with conviction to excel in academic and real life, where the psychological, emotional, physical and spiritual intelligence are formed. Helping students to seek the truth in the scientific and spiritual realm might be a tall order, but this endeavour would help teachers to critically access issues within a broader view of humanity instead of ideological and partisan party politics that would restrict their minds as they relate to students through a mindset of political partisanship.

Current realities show that our education system plays a major part in merely imparting knowledge through rote learning and preparing students for exams, devoid of understanding of the broader purpose of education. Teachers having political inclinations would make things worse with the misplaced priorities of serving two masters of politics and education, that would further weaken the education system in this country.

Therefore, I hope the government would reconsider its decision. Teachers who are civil servants should not lose their professional character and should spend more time in contributing ideas to develop our education system besides playing a critical role in democracy by advocating clear ethics to all students instead of being involved in partisan party politics.

This way they also help students to become better citizens indirectly contributing to a more ethical political landscape of this country.

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