



**What now for defeated PKR leaders?  
Malaysiakini.com  
September 29, 2010**

Does losing the support of PKR members also mean losing one's standing as an elected representative of the people?

According to Teluk Kemang MP Kamarul Baharin Abbas (*right*), who was defeated by Port Dickson assemblyperson M Ravi last Sunday, the answer is 'No'.

"As far as I am concerned, I am not resigning as (parliamentarian). There is still a lot I have to do in my constituency and I serve everyone, not just PKR members," he said when contacted.

Nevertheless, in a statement immediately after his defeat, Kamarul had said the party is signaling to the constituents that he is unfit to be a parliamentarian.

Clarifying this, he said this is because certain quarters believe he lost because he has not served his constituents well.

"(Teluk Kemang members) are free to propose to party leadership that I be replaced, if they believe so," he said.

Ravi, though, said his victory does not mean that Kamarul has lost the support of his constituents.

PKR members had voted for him not because they shun Kamarul, he said, but because they value the assemblyperson's work as acting division chief since 2008.

"I was already functioning as a division chief and Kamarul was in fact 'challenging' me. In any case, I was born and bred here, so most of the people who voted for me are my relatives," he said in jest.

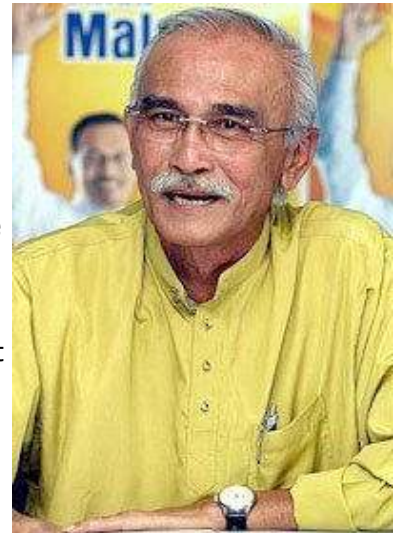
While Ravi may have brushed off the Negri Sembilan party chief's fears, it remains a possible aftermath of the heated first-time direct contest.

The same ramifications could also be in store for Batu Tiga assemblyperson and state exco Rodziah Ismail who lost to Kota Anggerik assemblyperson Yaakob Sapari.

For Rodziah, however, her "frustrating" loss has nothing to do with her level of service as assemblyperson, even though Batu Tiga is located in Shah Alam.

"Grassroots party support does not reflect the support of the constituency. Maybe it's because I was less close to the party members as I am not a committee member for the division," said Rodziah who garnered about one-third of the votes.

"I believe in reform, so I will not pay for membership fees of my supporters or anything like that, and with that I got about 200 votes, which I think is quite solid."





Another state assemblyperson who could face the same question is Bukit Lanjan assemblyperson and Selangor executive councillor Elizabeth Wong (*left*), who was defeated in the Petaling Jaya Utara contest.

The result remains in dispute, however, with investigations under way into Wong's complaint that her opponent did not qualify to contest.

Her constituency does not fall under Petaling Jaya Utara, where she contested. As such, it should not directly reflect unhappiness over service levels in the constituency.

Members of a certain division may not necessarily be a constituent in the same area, raising doubts about a correlation between constituency support and grassroots politics.

'Bad Malaysian habit'

Although Wong is mum on the issue, her boss and Selangor Menteri Besar Khalid Ibrahim has inadvertently leapt to her support.

At a book launch on Monday, Khalid said a win at divisional level "does not mean anything (in relation) to the position of the elected representative".

This is echoed by Monash University political scientist James Chin, who said that grassroots party support is "irrelevant" to an elected representative's standing.

He said there are many democracies, including the US and UK, where party chairpersons do not become state elected representatives.

"This is a bad Malaysian habit, following 50 years of BN rule, where an elected representative is considered a mini-god in the area and everything goes through this one person," he said.

To date, 166 PKR divisions have conducted their annual general meetings, with polls at seven divisions postponed due to reported irregularities. The remaining 39 divisions will hold their meetings this weekend.

According to secretary general Saifuddin Nasution, a decision on whether to hold another election for Subang and Parit Sulong will be made pending a report from election officers.

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