

It's My Right To Pose Questions During Debate
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Jessie Ooi

As a member of the audience during the debate between MCA President Dr Chua Soi Lek and DAP Secretary General Lim Guan Eng, I have a right to pose questions on issues which I don't understand. Lim Guan Eng also has the right to a choice of whether he wants to reply my inquiry or not. But after the event, any questions or disputes with the issues raised during the conference should be raised with the event organisers.

The announcement by the Penang Island Municipal Council (MPPP) to take legal action against me is an attempt at preventing the rakyat from the right to information. Since DAP claims to promote transparency in their administration, why did they not refute me during the debate, but instead declare that action will be taken against the individual who posed the question to the Chief Minister after the debate? In future, will Malaysians who ask questions to the Penang state government on state policies face the risk of prosecution?

DAP encourages the culture of suppressing information by desiring to take legal action against people who make inquiries. This places pressure on the ordinary citizen who asks questions pertaining to state policy. Does Lim Guan Eng and DAP accept this culture and encourage this practice?

As a political worker, I just want to be able to reflect the aspirations of the people in Lim Guan Eng's constituency. I admit that during the debate, the time for questions was limited and it was a very intense affair stemming from supporters of both parties resulted with myself to be emotional and not being able to convey my message properly. This had caused all the misunderstanding and confusion, which I regret. The Penang Island Municipal Council has the right and responsibility to correct or refute my remarks, but should not prosecute me.

I would also like to clarify: the Penang Island Municipal Council law enforcement officers have the right to enforce the law to legitimately clamp vehicles. However, I urge them to place primary consideration on the safety of the public. In fact, I have witnessed law enforcement officers involved in a brawl with vehicle owners. This refers to 25 October 2011 involving a vehicle parked along Jalan Burma near the premises of Hong Leong Bank. I definitely did not say that the law enforcement officers should not enforce the law. Due to a lack of parking lots along Jalan Burma and considering the location of banks along the yellow line, people do not want to risk their safety at night by parking far away. They are forced to park their vehicle illegally along the yellow line but near the bank and risk being penalised.

I worry that any criticisms (clear or vague information) by the general public against MPPP will incur the latter's prosecution against the former. This is detrimental against a democratic society. It will cause citizens to fear being prosecuted, thereby declining to comment or express doubt against any government shortcoming.

As the MPPP falls under the purview of the Pakatan-led state government, they should provide a frank explanation to any criticism that is unclear or incorrect without the need to resort to legal prosecution. Otherwise, the people's right to information will be rejected.

JESSIE OOI is Barisan Nasional Coordinator for Selayang

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