

**Gerakan Welcomes Amendment To Section 15 Of UUCA
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 25 (Bernama) -- Gerakan has welcomed the announcement made by the prime minister to amend Section 15 of the Universities and University Colleges Act (UUCA), 1971 to allow students aged 21 and above to be involved in politics.

The party said the move showed the government's commitment to undertaking political reforms.

Gerakan vice-president Datuk Mah Siew Keong said the party through its Youth wing had been persistent in urging the government to either repeal or amend the outdated UUCA 1971 in order to uphold basic human rights and civil liberty enshrined in the Federal Constitution.

Under Section 15 of the UUCA 1971, university students are not allowed to form an alliance, support, empathise with or oppose any political party, labour union or any organisation or group without prior permission from the university vice- chancellor.

Offenders face a jail term of up to six months or a fine of RM1,000, or both.

"University students are the future leaders of our country, so they should also be given the liberty to be involved in politics. We should be confident with the political awareness, maturity of thought and wisdom of our university students," Mah said in a statement, here, Friday.

He hopes the prime minister will reconsider the decision to appeal against the Court of Appeal's judgment on the UUCA case involving four Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) students.

In September 2010, the High court ruled that Section 15(5)(a) of the UUCA, 1971 was consistent with the Federal Constitution, but the four students then appealed against the court's decision.

On Oct 31 this year, the Court of Appeal set aside the decision of the High Court, declaring that Section 15(5)(a) of the UUCA as unconstitutional as it violated Article 10 of the Federal Constitution.

"However, to be fair, students should also abide by the rules and not bring in political ideologies and activities into campus," Mah said.

Meanwhile, the Federation of Peninsular Malay Students (GPMS) said the government's plan to amend Section 15 of the UUCA would have a positive impact on students.

Its president Jais Abdul Karim said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's determination to prove that the government understood the aspirations of university students was in tune with the openness in a borderless world.

In a statement, he said university students should now know how to divide their time

between politics and studies so that their main aim of seeking higher education would not be sidelined.

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