

Opposition Senators Fail To Stop Passing Of Peaceful Assembly Bill
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KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 20 (Bernama) -- Opposition senators failed to stop the Peaceful Assembly Bill 2011 Tuesday after a majority of Dewan Negara members voted in its favour in a voting by division system.

The voting system, which was requested by the opposition, saw 30 members supporting it while eight others dissented.

Earlier, when tabling the bill, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Liew Vui Keong said the bill allows citizens the rights to gather peacefully and without weapons, with certain conditions deemed necessary to maintain public safety and order.

"The bill is the way forward towards strengthening the rule of law and upholding fundamental rights in Malaysia, in particular, the rights to gather peacefully and without weapons," he said.

The bill was approved by the Dewan Rakyat on Nov 29 with six amendments.

One of the amendments, involving Clause 9(1), allows organisers of assemblies to notify the police only 10 days before the event and not 30 days as in the original bill.

Clause 12(1) was amended to shorten from 48 hours to 24 hours the period for the police to respond to the organisers' notification of an assembly.

Clause 12(2) was also amended to shorten from five days to 24 hours the period for the vested party to make an objection to the police over the notice of assembly.

The period for the police to respond to the objection was also shortened, from 12 days to five days, as per an amendment to Clause 14.

An amendment to Clause 15 enables the police to impose restrictions on various aspects of the assembly, including the time and place, to maintain safety and public order to safeguard the rights of others.

Clause 16 was amended to shorten the period of appeal by the organisers to the minister.

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