

**Sinar Harian to host PKR-Umno PTPTN debate**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 14 – PKR strategy director Rafizi Ramli has accepted Sinar Harian’s offer to host a debate between him and Umno Youth Chief Khairy Jamaluddin over the National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) this May 3, Sinar Harian reported today.

Yesterday, Rafizi challenged the youth leader to debate Pakatan Rakyat’s (PR) proposal to offer free education and abolish the federal student loan scheme, to which Khairy agreed.

“I received an offer from Sinar Harian, from (Chief Executive Officer Karang kraf Media Group) Datuk Hussamuddin Yaacob saying that he was ready to host our debate. I agreed and welcomed the offer, and shall discuss this with Khairy,” Rafizi (picture) allegedly told Sinar Harian Online yesterday.

He added that since Khairy had allowed him to choose the location and format, they would discuss the details soon.

“I will recommend the US presidential format for the debate, and will iron out the details with Khairy later,” he told Sinar Harian.

Meanwhile, Hussamuddin said that Karang kraf Media Group made the offer because they are open to hosting debates that could benefit the nation.

Khairy will also be debating with Bersih 2.0 Chairman Datuk Ambiga Sreenivasan on April 25 over electoral reforms.

Rafizi had previously pointed out that Khairy himself had appeared to agree on Twitter that scrapping PTPTN was possible, taking a different viewpoint from his party president, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

In his tweet on Wednesday afternoon, Khairy had added, “PKR missing the point re PTPTN. It’s not whether govt CAN write off the loans. Its whether the govt SHOULD. Most don’t think govt should”. Najib, when responding to PR’s suggestion, had claimed over the weekend that scrapping PTPTN would cost taxpayers some RM43 billion.

Maintaining his party’s stand, Rafizi repeated that PTPTN’s current bill was not RM43 billion as claimed but RM24.7 billion, which could be repaid over a long period.

“The only investment needed is about RM2 billion a year and many resources can be used for this, including channelling oil and gas profits into the education field, slashing our defence bill, combatting corruption and plugging leakages and wastages,” he suggested in a statement here.

The RM2 billion sum, he added, was very small in comparison with Najib’s allegedly “unprofitable” administrative decisions - the RM1 billion grant to Maju Holdings in the sale of the Kuala Lumpur - Putrajaya highway, writing off Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli’s RM589 million

debt to Danaharta and the RM250 million loan for the scandal-ridden National Feedlot Centre (NFC) project.

"In reality, wastages from each year are far more than the RM2 billion needed to abolish the PTPTN," he said.

"Even more important, this would be a good opportunity for us to review the entire structure of the country's education system."

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