

Dewan Rakyat rejects proposal for PSC review of security Bill
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KUALA LUMPUR, April 17 — The Dewan Rakyat today rejected the opposition's attempt to send the Security Offences (Special Measures) Bill back for review by a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC).

A majority of backbenchers in the House dismissed the proposal moved by R. Sivarasa (PKR-Subang) by voice vote.

The MP had submitted a motion notice under Standing Order 55(1) to the Speaker's office on Friday, seeking for the second reading of the Bill to be postponed to a further six months pending a review.

Standing Order states: "Any Committee to which a Bill is committed before its second reading may discuss the details of the Bill as well as its merits and principles."

Sivarasa (picture) had stood yesterday to table the motion before the policy stage debate began for the second reading of the Bill.

But citing his interpretation of the Standing Order, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Pandikar Amin Mulia assured the PKR lawmaker that he could move the motion before the committee stage debate instead.

Sivarasa stood again today to raise the motion after Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz completed his winding up of the policy stage debate, just before the House moved into committee stage.

But Deputy Speaker Datuk Ronald Kiandee told the parliamentarian that the motion should instead be moved under Standing Orders 55(2).

Standing Order 55(2) states: "Any other committee to which a Bill is committed after its second reading shall not debate the principle of the Bill but only its details."

"I have with me a notice from the Speaker," he said, when speaking to Sivarasa.

But the PKR leader interjected to the change, pointing out that Standing Order 55(2) does not allow the parliamentary panel to discuss the "principle" of the Bill but merely its "details".

Despite countless objections from Sivarasa, however, Kiandee later put the motion for vote under Standing Orders 55(2) and BN backbenchers hollered their unanimous disapproval in unison.

Opposition lawmakers have rejected the newly-proposed law, insisting that although it rightfully seeks to repeal the Internal Security Act (ISA), the Bill was merely a rebranding of

the controversial preventive law that was enacted in 1960 to fight the communist insurgency.

Pakatan Rakyat (PR) de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had told the House during the debate yesterday that the new law was "no different from the ISA".

Among others, the opposition has criticised provisions in the law which still accords the police powers to make arbitrary arrests of persons suspected to have committed a security offence.

The law, they have argued, also effectively transfers powers to keep a person under detention for lengthy periods from the home minister to the judiciary, which they say is still an infringement of human rights.

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