

**Vote for candidate, not party, says MCA's Cheng Liang**  
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**By Opalyn Mok**

GEORGE TOWN, April 25 — Voters should consider voting for quality candidates instead of picking based on sentiments for any party in Election 2013, Penang MCA state wanita chief Tan Cheng Liang said today.

The former Jawi state assemblyman, who is the Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate for the state seat in Nibong Tebal, said this was the only way to retain talent in the government that will benefit the people.

"If you want good policies and to retain good talent, it is better for people to vote based on the candidates so that these candidates can present better policies in parliament and the state assembly," she told The Malaysian Insider in an interview.

She believed that with good, quality candidates who know how to come up with solutions and policies for state and country, and from both sides of the political divide, all would benefit.

"This way, both sides can come up with good policies and brainstorm for new ideas that benefit the people and these need not necessarily be populist policies," she said.

The BN information chief, who has been down on the ground canvassing for votes in the past few years, is greatly disheartened by the waning support for the ruling coalition especially amongst the youth.

"I find it very hard this time around and my heart is heavy because no matter how much development and infrastructure we may have done for the people, it is not easy to change their mentality," she said.

In Election 2008, Cheng Liang lost her seat to DAP newcomer Tan Beng Huat by 3,790 votes, almost a reversal of the majority with which Cheng Liang had retained her Jawi state seat during the 2004 general election — 4,726 votes.

She blamed popular social media site Facebook, where most youths obtain "news" about politics and the elections, for the change in the mindset of the people for BN.

In the predominantly non-Malay state seat where 54 per cent are Chinese and 22 per cent are Indians while a comparatively low 22 per cent are Malays, it will not be easy for BN to win back the seat.

This is especially when most of the non-Malays have a single purpose in wanting change, and according to Cheng Liang, it is all due to the blame-game by the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) that has put BN and all its candidates in a bad light.

When The Malaysian Insider spoke to some locals in Jawi town, several of them criticised the "rampant corruption by BN leaders".

"We are no longer ignorant like previously because now, we have access to the internet so we do not rely on newspapers that do not publish the truth," said one of them.

Cheng Liang admitted that will be tough to fight against this especially when Penang BN is still not as adept at being the Opposition in the state.

"They make sweeping statements smearing all leaders in BN with the same brush to the point of people believing all their lies and thinking that all BN candidates are the same when this is not the case," she said.

Cheng Liang says it is time for voters to move away from this politics of hate and lies, and to instead assess their candidates based on each individual's ability, regardless of which party they are from with the exception of PAS.

"I am only against PAS because of their policy of wanting to implement hudud but others, I feel the voters should vote based on capabilities and quality of candidates," she said.

Cheng Liang is in a straight fight with DAP's former councillor Soon Lip Chee this time around.

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