

**Cut spending for PM's department projects, not JPA scholarships, says DAP**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**Jan 21, 2016**

DAP has criticised Putrajaya's move to freeze Public Service Department (JPA) scholarships for degree courses as well as the Education Ministry's bursary for pre-university programmes, saying the move unfairly targeted high-performing students from low-income families.

The party's chief whip Anthony Loke said that without the scholarships, these youths would not be able to further their studies.

Loke said if cutbacks were needed, the prime minister should lead by example and reduce the allocation for discretionary spending and spending for non-specific programmes under the Prime Minister's Department.

He said among those that could be cut are: restructuring of society (RM750 million); development programme (RM610 million); electronic government project (754.4 million); special project (RM309.4 million); people centric project (RM1.33 billion), adding that all this accumulated to RM3.75 billion.

"The five examples here under the Prime Minister's Department alone amount to RM3.75 billion.

"If every listed category is cut by 50%, it would be enough to maintain the JPA scholarships allocated for 2016," he said.

News of the suspension was first reported by Chinese newspaper Sin Chew Daily yesterday, quoting Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Wee Ka Siong, who said it would affect students this year in view of falling government revenues due to low oil prices.

Loke said Putrajaya must explain whether some 11,000 students estimated to receive the JPA scholarships would be affected, or only 700 as reported by Sin Chew.

He said that according to the Federal Expenditure Budget 2016, about 11,604 students were estimated to get the JPA scholarship for their first degree.

"If it is only 700 from the 11,604 excellent students who are affected, the government must explain why this particular group of students are being victimised.

"What is the criteria that they are being sacrificed," the Seremban MP asked.

The allocation for JPA scholarships in 2016 was RM1.65 billion, Loke said citing the expenditure budget, and this was a reduction of 14% compared to RM1.93 billion allocated last year.

"We urge the prime minister to rescind this decision and give government's full commitment that none of the excellent students who were offered scholarships this year would be sacrificed in the process of the Budget revision.

"Although falling oil prices has affected government revenue, savings and spending priority are decisions that can be made by the prime minister who is also the finance minister," he said. – January 21, 2016.

Copyright © 2015 Edge Insider Sdn Bhd

Source:

<http://www.themalaysianinsider.com/malaysia/article/cut-spending-for-pms-department-projects-not-jpa-scholarships-says-dap>