

Press Statement, 14 December 2020

Perlis Government Lauded for Providing Constituency Funds to Opposition ADUNs

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Elections (BERSIH 2.0) lauds the Perlis Menteri Besar office for its recent statement that the Perlis government will not marginalise members of the state assembly (ADUNs) from opposition parties and will channel constituency development funds (CDF) to opposition ADUNs as well. The CDF is an important policy tool for constituency representatives to take care of small infrastructure gaps, community development and welfare support for their constituents.

Typically, the CDF is unfairly granted to MPs from government parties while MPs from opposition parties are marginalised. This is also unfair to the rakyat in constituencies held by the opposition as the government and ADUNs should serve the rakyat without discrimination, and social and developmental issues should not be discriminated by any party.

In formulating the CDF policy, BERSIH 2.0 wishes to recommend the Perlis government to give equal amounts of constituency development funds to all ADUNs. If the amount is to be different, it should be reasonably justified and based on the needs of the constituency and not on party affiliation.

BERSIH 2.0 also calls on the Perlis government to incorporate the following measures into its CDF policy:

1. For accountability and transparency, there should be clear reporting mandated with regards to how the funds are spent and which services or contractors are procured with these funds. Project names and timelines should also be reported with such reporting available for public scrutiny.
2. These projects should not be decided on by the ADUN alone. "Participatory budgeting," should be introduced for at least 50% of the CDF for all ADUNS.
3. In the case of funds being misspent, there should also be punitive measures to address this to ensure accountability. With poor reporting and a lack of monitoring, there is a risk for the funding being channeled into non-priority projects or easy, short term gain projects.

In the long run, BERSIH 2.0 calls on all other state governments and the federal government to formalise their CDF policy to ensure fair treatment to all ADUNs and MPs and to prevent it from being abused as a system of patronage and to perpetuate clientelist linkages between ADUNs/MPs and their voters. There should be rigorous guidelines, monitoring and auditing to prevent any abuse of funds or wastage.

Released by,

The Steering Committee of BERSIH 2.0

BERSIH 2.0 Secretariat

A-2-8, 8 Avenue Business Centre, Jalan Sungai Jernih 8/1, 46050 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel. No. : +603-79314444

Fax No. : +603-79314111

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