

Press Release from BERSIH

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Johor Challenge: No Stability and Accountability Without Political and Institutional Reform

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Election (BERSIH) challenges all political parties and election candidates in the Johor Polls to promise stability and accountability after election through political system and institutional reform as their main agenda in the election manifesto.

BERSIH is of the view that political stability alone is not sufficient if there is no accountability and this is very important to restore the people's confidence in the democratic system in our country. Our political system is lagging behind and it is time for our democracy to move forward through political reforms to be healthier, mature and professional.

Therefore, in the interest of political stability and a more mature and healthy democratic system, we urge the candidates and political parties who will be contesting in the Johor state elections to

take up the Johor Challenge by promising the following reforms, not only in their manifestos, but also prepare to work with other parties to realize these reforms, which may require amendments to the State Constitution:

1. Enact a Recall Procedure Enactment to empower voters' supremacy to recall their representative who has hopped party or coalition. Voters will be able to determine to keep or sack those who party hopped or dismissed by the party leadership due to political differences or chasing their self-interest, through an election petition that fulfils a certain threshold.

2. Introduce Constructive Vote of No Confidence (CVNC) by amending State Constitution and Standing Order of the State Assembly to make it compulsory that Menteri Besar cannot be ousted unless a vote of no confidence also contains the name of his successor approved by a simple majority, and no new election is required if the new Menteri Besar can be replaced by such method. This process needs to take place and be proven in the State Assembly. This also can prevent a divided opposition from toppling the government when they themselves do not have a majority.

3. Enact a Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Enactment to guarantee equal CDF to all elected representatives regardless of whether they are State Assemblypersons of the ruling or opposition parties. Unequal CDF will only punish the people in the constituencies and create an unlevelled playing field between government representatives and opposition representatives.

4. **Enact a public funding of political parties enactment based on vote share** they receive in the last general election. Public funding of political parties can reduce political parties focus on finding fund for their party operation and assist their elected representative on research and producing better policies. Only parties achieved certain threshold will receive this funding.

5. **Enact Fixed Term Assembly Enactment** to make it compulsory for a Menteri Besar to get two-third majority support in the State Assembly if he wants to dissolve the State Assembly before end of the term. This legislation will not interfere with the power of the Sultan to dissolve State Assembly.

6. **Introduce two-term limit for Menteri Besar** to allow for new menteri besar candidates so there will always be a new generation of leaders that is more competent and energetic.

7. **Introduce Top-up Women Only Additional Seats (TWOAS)** to reach 30% of elected women representative quota in the State Assembly. If the State Assemblywomen after Johor Polls is less than 30% (at least 17 from 56 seats), additional women representative will be appointed to fill the quota. Unlike Sabah, Terengganu, Pahang and Melaka, TWOAS representatives cannot be monopolized by government parties, instead the TWOAS seats that need to filled will be distributed proportionately to all contesting parties based on percentage of votes they get. TWOAS elected representatives will be perform duty to all Johor voters without any constituency through State Assembly Committees. The additional representatives can only be elected for a term to give ways for new representative. (For more info on TWOAS, please refer to White Paper produced by Penang:

<https://pwdc.org.my/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/TWOAS-White-Paper-Eng.pdf>

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BERSIH urges all the parties and election candidates to commit to this reform agenda immediately. This reform should be the core of the election manifesto so that politics will not be manipulated for the interests of certain parties and turn its back on the people and undermine the political institutions of our country. Those who refuse to commit to this proposal hope to profit from the loopholes that exist in our political system should be punished by the voters in Johor.

BERSIH also urges all parties accepting the Johor Challenge to sign a Healthy Competition Agreement to pledge their readiness to accept the people's decision on polling day, will not entice other party's assemblyperson to defect and will work with each others in amending the State Constitution and Standing Order and in enacting new laws in to realize the Johor Challenge.

Released by:

The Steering Committee of BERSIH

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