

BERSIH 2.0 PRESS RELEASE, 4 November 2020

The Coalition for Clean and Fair Election (Bersih 2.0) views with great concern over the proposal of making new law to postpone elections as this may lead to an abuse of power by politicians to stay in power indefinitely. Furthermore, postponing elections would require amendments of the Federal and State Constitutions, which is infeasible, undesirable and unjustifiable in the current political context. A two-third majority for constitutional amendments is simply impossible in the Parliament and in most legislatures.

We believe that elections can be conducted safely during Covid-19 pandemic if the Election Commission could propose to the Cabinet an expansion of absentee voting facilities, whether postal, early or distant, to all voters with legitimate needs. Amendments of the Elections (Registration of Electors) Regulations 2002, Elections (Conduct of Elections) Regulations 1981 and the Elections (Postal Voting) Regulations 2003 need only be laid before Dewan Rakyat.

New Zealand and the United States have proved that elections can be safely conducted where voters were allowed to vote over a period of time instead of in one day as we practised in our electoral system. As a result, overcrowding in the polls can be easily avoided and the voters' safety can be assured in the midst of a pandemic.

To avoid cross-state and cross-district traveling and crowding on polling day, Bersih 2.0 calls for access for all voters to vote early, to vote in distant voting centres or to post their ballots. The safety of the voters in these unprecedented times must be ensured by the EC. This is an extraordinary time, the EC must boldly reform the the voting process to fit our new normals.

Campaign methods must be changed to adhere to the SOPs and the physical distancing between the candidates and the public to be strictly enforced. To replace rallies and door-to-door canvassing, the EC should use its power under Article 115 of the Federal Constitution to secure the assistance of RTM - and even the good will of private broadcasters - to provide for party leaders' debates and free airtime for all candidates for all constituencies. The EC should in fact have Elections (Televised Debates and Free Airtime) Regulations laid before the Dewan Rakyat before the Sarawak State Election is called.

Bersih 2.0 firmly believes it is unnecessary to have a new law to allow postponement or suspension election. It will just be another law for politicians to remain in power and to avoid another electoral defeat.

Released by,

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

| [Web](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) |