

## All should support Sexual Offences against Children Bill



Barisan Nasional and opposition lawmakers have united to support the Sexual Offences against Children Bill 2017 which was tabled in Parliament. — Picture by Kamles Kumar

ALL Malaysians should welcome the tabling of the Sexual Offences against Children Bill 2017 in the Dewan Rakyat last Tuesday, which is a landmark legislation to deal with crime against children.

It is important for all parties to understand and support the proposed Bill, which main purpose is to help address issues of exploitation and sexual abuse against children.

The proposed legislation will only work if it gets the support from all sections of the community. They must also play their roles to help the authorities nab the perpetrators and charge them in the proposed special

court for such cases.

The support from across the political divides, as shown by both the backbenchers and opposition lawmakers, proves they could become a pacesetter for similar efforts in the future.

The bipartisanship is an eye-opener that all of us can work together to support proposed legislations that will benefit the public.

Crimes against children are rampant and have been in existence for years due to inadequate law to address them effectively.

Bukit Aman Sexual, Women and Child investigation Division (D11) investigation unit head DSP Tan Gee Soon had in

November last year said police had recorded almost 10,000 cases of children falling victim to some types of sex crime from 2013.

These include about 6,200 cases of child rape, 834 child incest, and 2,893 cases of outraging the modesty of a child.

I urge the authorities to publicise the new legislation after it has been passed by parliament.

It will ensure that everyone knows about the provisions under the new legislation and none of them can claim they are unaware of it.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said tabled the

Sexual Offences against Children Bill 2017 for its first reading in the Dewan Rakyat.

Azalina informed the House that the second and third readings of the Bill would be done during this parliamentary meeting.

Key provisions in the proposed new law include a section on child grooming, making it an offence to "sexually communicate", or "meeting a child for sexual purposes".

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