

## **ADVISORY ON PARTY POLITICAL FILMS AND THE USE OF PAID INTERNET ELECTION ADVERTISING**

### Prohibition of Party Political Films

As the 2020 General Election goes into the campaigning period, there has been an increase in the number of politically-themed online videos produced by political parties, socio-political entities and individuals. In using film as a platform to conduct political discourse, all persons should respect the need to keep politics rational and grounded on facts.

2 All political parties, candidates and voters are reminded that they must not make, reproduce, import, exhibit or distribute party political films (PPFs). Under the Films Act, PPFs include films that are made by any person and directed towards any political end in Singapore, such as those intended or likely to affect voting in any election in Singapore.

3 The law, however, exempts certain types of party political films. Allowable films include:

- (a) Live recordings of events held in accordance with the law (e.g. recordings of live streamed rallies, campaigning activities);
- (b) Anniversary and commemorative videos of political parties;
- (c) Factual documentaries, biographies or autobiographies;
- (d) Manifestos of political parties produced by or on behalf of a political party;
- (e) Candidate's (or group of candidates') declaration of policies or ideology produced by or on behalf of the candidate (or group of candidates) (e.g. election candidate introduction videos); and
- (f) Films made solely for the purpose of reporting of news by a licensed broadcasting service.

4 This ensures that political debate in Singapore is conducted in a responsible and dignified manner, and not by using the film medium to sensationalise serious issues in a biased or emotional manner. The law thus upholds the seriousness of the election process.

5 All political parties and candidates must ensure that their political films do not contravene the Films Act. Persons who make or publish non-exempted PPFs may be subjected to investigations and prosecution under the Films Act. When in doubt over the contents of a political film, please consult the IMDA.

6 Videos uploaded online should also comply with the Internet Code of Practice (ICOP).

### Illegal Paid Internet Election Advertising by Non-Candidates/Election Agents

7 There have also been socio-political entities and individuals, who are not political parties or prospective candidates, engaging in paid Internet election advertising (IEA) in this period leading up to the General Elections.

8 All persons are reminded that while any Singapore Citizen can put up unpaid IEA on their own accord, except on Cooling-Off Day and Polling Day, the publishing of paid IEA could constitute conduct of an election activity, for which authorisation by a candidate or an election agent from Nomination Day is required under the Parliamentary Elections Act. This ensures accountability and that paid advertisements will not be used as a conduit for foreign interference in the elections process, or to bypass the election expense limits for political parties and candidates. The same requirements apply to the conduct of election activity in traditional “offline” campaigning.

9 All election advertising must contain the name of the publisher and the name of every person for whom or at whose direction the election advertising is published. For paid IEA, additional particulars must accompany the advertising, namely, that it was paid for by the candidate, political party or an authorised third party campaigner if the latter had paid for advertising. This can be by means of using words like “sponsored by” or “paid for by” on the IEA.

10 Election advertising (including paid and unpaid IEA) is not allowed on Cooling-Off Day and Polling Day. This is unless the election advertising was already lawfully displayed or published before the start of Cooling-off Day, and remains unchanged after its publication or display.

11 The outcome of Singapore elections must be for Singaporeans, and Singaporeans alone to decide. Individuals who are not citizens of Singapore are prohibited from taking part in any election activity.

**ISSUED BY  
INFOCOMM MEDIA DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
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