

5 August 2019

Written Reply to Parliamentary Question on Review of Eligible Voting Age For Singaporeans

Question:

Dr Lim Wee Kiak asked the Prime Minister (a) if he will review the eligible voting age for Singaporeans under the Parliamentary Elections Act; (b) what is the consideration for retaining the current voting age; and (c) how many more voters will be eligible if the current voting age is changed to 18 years old.

Written reply by Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, for the Prime Minister:

We have adopted a graduated approach in setting the various legal ages at which a person can undertake different responsibilities in Singapore. A person's rights and responsibilities gradually increase as one matures, until the common law age of majority of 21, when a person comes of age to make decisions as an adult and engages in activities that involve significant personal responsibility.

As has been explained in this House before, voting in elections involves making serious choices, which requires experience and maturity. Voters elect the President who exercises the custodial and veto powers under the Constitution. Voters also choose their Member of Parliament, and in so doing, decide on the group of individuals who will eventually form the Government.

If we were to lower the voting age to 18 years old today, some 130,000 youths would become eligible to vote. The Government currently does not plan to lower the voting age. Nevertheless, we recognise that many youths want a voice in national matters and wish to make a difference. We will continue to keep such channels and platforms open for youths to express their views, and contribute to nation building. For instance, MCCY has launched the SG Youth Action Plan to give youths a platform to articulate their vision for the country, and propose policy ideas and partnership projects to achieve this vision.