

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **REMINDER ON LAWS ON ONLINE ELECTION ADVERTISING, ELECTION SURVEYS AND EXIT POLLS**

If the 2023 Presidential Election is contested and goes into the campaigning period on 22 August 2023, the Elections Department would like to remind the public on the rules and prohibitions under the Presidential Elections Act concerning online election advertising (OEA), election surveys and exit polls.

#### **Ban on Publication of Election Surveys and Exit Polls**

2 The publication of the results of an election survey, or any content purporting to be the results of an election survey, is not allowed during the election period, once the Writ of Election is issued. An election survey is an opinion survey of how voters will vote at an election or of the preferences of voters respecting any candidate or any issue with which an identifiable candidate is associated at an election.

3 Since the Writ of Election was issued, the Elections Department has observed breaches of the ban on the publication of the results of an election survey on various online platforms. The appropriate enforcement action has been taken against these breaches. The public is reminded to abide by this ban. For example, the public should not create polls on social media platforms (e.g. Instagram, TikTok), online forums (e.g. Reddit), messaging services (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram), or websites, where the results of the survey can be viewed, as this will be considered a breach. Another example of a breach is posting or reposting the results of an election survey on the aforementioned platforms.

4 Similarly, the publication of the results of an exit poll is also not allowed during the election period. An exit poll is any (a) statement on how voters have voted at the election, or (b) forecast on the result of the election, where the statement or forecast is (or might reasonably be taken to be) based on information from voters after they have voted.

#### **Online Election Advertising Published by Candidates, Election Agents and Authorised Persons**

5 All persons are reminded that the publishing of paid OEA is reserved for candidates, election agents, and authorised persons. A person can only publish paid OEA if he receives written authorisation from a candidate or election agent from Nomination Day. All paid OEA must be declared to the Returning Officer by the candidate or election agent, and abide by the published-by requirements. This ensures transparency and accountability and prevents the use of paid advertisements as a conduit for foreign interference in the elections process, or to bypass the election expense limits for candidates.

6 Under the published-by requirements, all OEA, whether paid or unpaid, must display clearly the full names of all persons who played an active role in publishing it. This comprises persons (a) responsible for publishing the OEA, (b) who approved the content of the OEA, and (c) who directed that the OEA be published. In addition, paid OEA is required to include a message or statement to indicate that it has been sponsored or paid for, and the full names of the persons who paid for it.

### **Unpaid Online Election Advertising Published by Singapore Citizens**

7 Singapore Citizens can put up unpaid OEA on their own accord except during the Cooling-off Period. This is the period which starts from Cooling-off Day (Thursday, 31 August 2023), 12am, and ends with the close of polling on Polling Day (Friday, 1 September 2023), 8pm.

### **Ban on Election Advertising During Cooling-off Period**

8 Election advertising by any person (including paid and unpaid OEA) is not allowed during the Cooling-off Period. OEA that was already lawfully published before Cooling-off Period and remains unchanged after its publication, need not be taken down. However, republishing existing OEA is considered to be publishing fresh OEA, and is also prohibited on Cooling-Off Day and Polling Day. Examples include sharing, resharing, reposting or boosting existing OEA.

### **Ban on Foreigners/Foreign Entities Publishing Online Election Advertising**

9 The outcome of Singapore's elections must be for Singaporeans alone to decide. Foreigners and foreign entities are prohibited from taking part in any election activity, and publishing or displaying any election advertising during the election period, i.e., from Writ to Polling Day.

**ISSUED BY  
ELECTIONS DEPARTMENT  
PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE**

**22 August 2023**