

7 August 2024

Written Reply to Parliamentary Question on Whether Political Parties or Candidates that Pay Digital Content Creators to Post Content Either Before or During Election Campaigns Will Be Required to Disclose These Payments

Question:

Mr Gerald Giam Yean Song: To ask the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance (a) whether political parties or candidates that pay digital content creators, either directly or indirectly, to post content either before or during election campaigns will be required to disclose these payments; (b) whether the said content creators are also required to declare the nature of their partnership with political parties or candidates within their posts; and (c) what are the disclosure requirements.

Written Reply by Mr Chan Chun Sing, Minister of Education, for the Prime Minister:

1 Under the legislation governing Online Election Advertising (OEA), only political parties, candidates, their election agents or other third parties who have received written authorisation are allowed to publish OEA that is paid for. Every payment made in respect of any expenses incurred in the conduct or management of an election must be submitted as part of the declarations by the candidates and their election agents, rather than the digital content creator, and supported with bills and receipts as set out in the relevant laws. This includes all paid OEA. The OEA must disclose that it is paid for, and show the full names of the persons who paid for it. The full names of the persons who approved the content of the OEA must be shown as well.

2 Election expenses include any expenses incurred whether before, during or after the election, in respect of the conduct or management of the election. Thus, any payments made to content creators during the non-election period ahead of any impending election would have to be declared as long as the content created is in respect of the conduct or management of the candidate's election. Outside of elections, there are also rules governing the receipt of donations received by all political parties, political office holders and other politically significant persons. Such donations must be disclosed under the Foreign Interference (Countermeasures) Act. There are also other accounting and disclosure requirements on political parties as well, as the Member will be aware.