



FAMILY FRONTIERS

# Persatuan Kebajikan Sokongan Keluarga Selangor & KL (PPM-011-10-24072020)

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## **Family Frontiers Applauds Decoupling of Some Citizenship Amendments for Foundlings and Stateless Children**

Family Frontiers is pleased by the government's move to halt the constitutional amendments that will negatively impact citizenship for foundlings and stateless children.

The government's decision to remove Section 19B of Part III of the Second Schedule and Section 1(e) of Part II of the Second Schedule from the proposed citizenship amendments. These adjustments guarantee that marginalised children, such as foundlings, stateless, and undocumented children, will still be eligible for Malaysian citizenship through legal means. We acknowledge the MADANI government's *ihsan* and maturity to implement change where it is needed and uphold justice for all children in Malaysia.

We would like to take this opportunity to urge the government to continue with this winning streak by only moving forward with the amendment to allow the overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers to obtain citizenship by operation of law, and decoupling the remaining amendments from it. The speedy citizenship approvals issued by the Home Ministry for the impacted Malaysian mothers have been tremendously helpful and they are touched by the minister's consideration.

Each day the impacted mothers and their overseas-born children are left to wait, is another day they are susceptible to profoundly burdening situations. Some mothers are struggling with the predicament of their children being stateless. Others, dealing with chronic health problems or facing terminal illness, are anxious about their children's legal standing if something were to happen to them. Furthermore, there are mothers entangled in custody disputes, single mothers, and those from disadvantaged backgrounds—all carrying the weight of uncertainty about the future, the absence of basic rights, the possibility of family separation, increased financial strain, and other challenges.

While we are thankful towards the government's initiatives to expedite the processing of these cases and provide Malaysian mothers with their rightful answers, there are still many mothers from our network who have been waiting for the results of their citizenship applications for years, even decades, with little to no response on the status of their applications.

The government must also not forget those who have faced repeated rejections and have yet to resubmit their applications, for they will be overlooked. As such, we would like to reiterate the importance of making it clear that the amendment is not only forward-looking,

but also retrospective, to ensure the wellbeing of all their overseas-born children regardless of their year of birth.

We also urge the government to disclose the draft bill as a Green Paper to allow all stakeholders to engage with the amendments in a democratic manner, as per the aspirations of a fair Malaysia MADANI. Family Frontiers will be more than willing to provide assistance and our full support to the government in any form needed, for the sake of the rights of women and children in Malaysia.