

Planning for campaigns of substance

It is almost two months since the start of the Legislative and Presidential Elections campaign period. Since its start on 23 September, political campaigns have still been rife with unnecessary and bland debates. Political campaigns nowadays are filled with mutual attacks, mutual slinging of catty comments, and efforts to bring down each other. Both sides seek each other's skeletons, drag them out of the closets, and blow up these skeletons up. It's nothing but the political games of rotten elites.

Campaigns should be the means for Presidential, Vice Presidential and Legislative Candidate to offer and showcase the best side of their visions, missions, and programs. Campaigns are more than just showing off the figures of the candidates themselves, but they should be about showcasing their brilliant and enlightening ideas, opinions, and views. This is actually a means for getting honest votes: by touching the masses' sympathy through their conscience, we can get the people to vote according to their full awareness and faith.

Campaigns are events that highly cultured societies look forward to, because this is the chance for the people to find out what their leaders are going to do in coming years. However, low-cultured societies would use campaigns as a means to attack and defeat each other, to hurt and humiliate each other. Presidential Election campaigns and Legislative Elections campaign should have been the right momentum for the candidates to provide political education to the people and enlighten them. Campaigns should not be filled with controversial comments that cause fights and divisions among our people.

We have yet to see intelligent and educational campaigns. All ideas are

still covered by the mist of marginal debates. Our political campaigns are still far from being happy, because they are still haunted by mutual slanders and lies. They are far from being fresh and beautiful, because they are chock-full of catty comments. Campaigns are still filled with snide comments and insults instead of substantial ideas.

There are two vital things that Legislative Election and Presidential Election contestants must do. First, they must build their self-image in the eyes of the public. Presidential, Vice Presidential and Legislative Candidates must build a positive image by organizing elegant, creative, and substantial campaigns. They must showcase their vision, mission, and programs to the voting public. A candidate's vision, mission, and programs should have been basic and true considerations for the people when they decide who to vote for on Voting Day. However, our voters tend to be more affected by the figures of the candidate themselves instead of their vision, mission, and programs.

Second, both the people and campaign teams tend to slander and insult their political opponents. This is very dangerous, and this is exactly what is happening in Nusantara's political scene. Because they want to destroy their opponents and humiliate them, they seek out the errors made by their political opponents and distribute them through the internet and make them go viral, in order to make the common people hate these opponents and lose sympathy against them.

These are the methods practiced in the political campaigns of this republic. This is extremely dangerous and must be avoided, but it happens nonetheless because of our people's tendency to be easily provoked and get carried away. Therefore, don't

wonder too much why our campaigns are filled with nothing but catty comments, slander, hoaxes, and bullshit. Our campaigns try to build up the figures' image not by showcasing their positive side, but more by spreading negative comments about their political opponents. This habit makes our politics nothing but useless babble.

Politicians should avoid this type of black campaign. If they love this country, they should start creating and supporting campaigns filled with messages of brotherhood and unity. It would be extremely dangerous if we become divided and enemies with each other just because of the elections. Maintaining the people's unity and integrity is much more important than just a matter of "who won the elections". Our elites must remember that elections are democratic competitions, and that it is common for anyone to win or lose in any competition.

We must all start to build our mutual awareness of our union and dependence with each other. We must live together with each other before and after the elections are over. We must always remember that elections are routine once-every-5-years events. We must not turn them into forums for mud-slinging. We need to build a courteous and cultured political scene. This is the most important thing.

Campaigns should be filled with optimistic and well-organized plans for improving the future lives of our citizens. We should simply review and debate the merits and demerits of each Candidate's vision, mission, and programs, instead of being catty with each other. Substantial campaigns are full of brilliant and enlightening ideas, opinions and plans that are explained clearly, properly, and politely.

Vision, mission, and programs should not just be the icing on the cake, the background that shows off the candidate. They must be the basic structure, the bones that hold up the figure of the Candidate. They are the reason why the people should vote for the Candidate, because they show how the Candidate is best equipped to bring stability and prosperity to the people. Vision, mission, and programs should not be airy and difficult to realize for the people. They must be applicable and practical, because the end result is to make the people appreciate the fruits of development that everybody works so hard on. They must not be hidden, but must be defined clearly and distributed widely.

We still have five-and-a-half months' time for campaigns. Let's all do our best campaign – a humane, gentle, solid campaign. We must maintain our brotherhood, our unity and integrity. We must be polite and respectful of each other. Campaigns should serve as an introductory phase to government for a better condition, instead of worsening it. Let us fill in our campaigns with positive, creative, innovative, and substantial issues. Political campaigns should bring us hope instead of fear, they should be based on truth and not lies. My fellow Indonesians, let us all campaign in peace, because peace is beautiful and is a comfort. Wouldn't you agree?



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