

Index Page

Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-25

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Session No. : 15

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Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-CMAB01	S023	LEUNG Hei, Edward	163	Electoral Services

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-CMAB01

(Question Serial No. S023)

Head: (163) Registration and Electoral Office

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: Electoral Services

Controlling Officer: Chief Electoral Officer (WANG Man-chiu, Raymond)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Question:

1. Regarding the reply to Question 3, the Government indicated that a total of 29 electors with mobility difficulty had submitted applications, and there were 2 complaints related to the applications. Upon investigation, it was found that the cases involved faults made by the staff. Concerning the relevant situations, did the Government review all the applications? According to the voting records, how many of the 29 electors who had submitted applications did cast their votes on the polling day?
2. Regarding the reply to Question 4, the Government indicated that it had strengthened the internal checking mechanism. In this connection, will the Government further explain how many levels of staff are involved in the double-checking under the existing mechanism? And whether there was no such mechanism and only a single staff member was relied on to perform double-checking in the past.
3. Regarding the reply to Question 4, the Government indicated that the staff members concerned would not be offered renewals upon the expiry of their employment contracts. Does the relevant contract terms include a contract gratuity? Will the Government explain why the staff members are still allowed to complete their contracts rather than being dismissed outright in case of committing such serious mistake? What are the standards underlying the decision?
4. Regarding the reply to Question 4, apart from the contract staff members concerned, does it involve negligence at management level? Does it raise any supervisory issues, especially concerning the immediate supervisors of the staff members in question? Has the Government imposed any penalties on the supervisors and made relevant records on their performance appraisals? If so, what are the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon LEUNG Hei, Edward

Reply:

Upon the receipt of the complaints, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) reviewed all the applications for re-allocation to other polling stations with barrier-free facilities to cast their votes submitted by those 29 electors with mobility difficulty. Apart from the 2 aforesaid complaints involving negligence of the staff who had failed to update the system with the records of changes of polling stations requested by the relevant electors, other applications were properly handled and approved eventually. As for the voting records of those 29 electors, the REO will not investigate whether individual electors have cast their votes by virtue of the principle of vote secrecy.

2. Each application for re-allocation of polling station submitted by an elector was handled and double-checked by 2 REO staff members of different ranks. In order to prevent recurrence of similar incidents, the REO will enhance the checking mechanism in future elections by involving staff members of higher ranks in conducting verification checks for each application, as well as arranging another team of staff members to conduct cross-checking, so as to further prevent human errors or negligence.

3. In appraising staff performance, the REO has to take a holistic approach, including the consideration of an appraisee's performance in various job areas during the contract period. In addition to handling applications submitted by the aforesaid electors for re-allocation to other polling stations to cast their votes, during the contract period, the staff members concerned were also responsible for other electoral arrangements of the polling and counting stations before the polling day, maintaining liaison with venue management of polling and counting stations, electoral staff and contractors, and follow-up work after the election such as handling electoral materials. Taking into account the overall performance of the staff members concerned in other job areas and in this incident, the REO has taken serious follow-up actions and decided not to offer renewals for them upon the expiry of their employment contracts.

4. The REO has made relevant records on the performance appraisal of the immediate supervisor of the contract staff concerned to reflect the situation, and reminded the staff member to handle each application with due care and caution in the future. The REO has also reminded all staff members responsible for handling such applications to strictly follow the enhanced checking mechanism mentioned above in the future to ensure that each application is properly handled.

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