

Employment Bill amendments **on hold**

> Minister denies withdrawal result of protests, says 'more things' to be added

AT THE DEWAN RAKYAT

BY **HUSNA YUSOP** AND
HEMANANTHANI SIVANANDAM
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

THE government withdrew the
Employment Bill 2010 (Amendments)

yesterday amid criticism from
trade unions.

Deputy Human Resource
Minister Datuk Maznah Mazlan
announced the withdrawal in the
house before question time. She did
not give any reason.

When contacted, the minister,

Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, said
the bill had been withdrawn to add
"more things" but declined to give the
details.

"We want to make some changes
but it will be tabled again at this
meeting," he said.

Subramaniam also refuted claims
the bill was withdrawn because of
protests from workers' groups.

He said the amendments to the
sexual harassment clause in the 1955
Employment Act were still in place
and would not be affected by the
changes.

Several groups, such as Parti
Sosialis Malaysia and NGO Jaringan
Rakyat Tertindas, have expressed

unhappiness at the amendments,
saying they appear to favour the
employers more than employees.

PSM had called for a nationwide
picket yesterday to reject the
proposed amendments.

The groups are also against the
proposed amendments to labour laws
such as the Industrial Relations Act
1967 and the Trade Unions Act 1959.

At a press conference at the
Parliament lobby, several DAP and
PKR MPs welcomed the withdrawal
of the bill.

DAP Ipoh Barat MP
M. Kulasegaran said a full review of
the 1967 Act is required to make it
more labour-friendly and to protect

the rights of lower income workers.

"There are many provisions in the
Industrial Relations Act 1967 which
are outdated and arbitrary. In fact,
some are even anti-labour in nature,"
he said.

"Hence, a full review of the
Industrial Relations Act is required to
make it more labour-friendly and a
better protector of the legitimate
rights of lower income workers.

"At present, the right to refer an
industrial case is at the minister's
discretion. This should be reviewed."

PKR Kuala Langat MP Abdullah
Sani Abdul Hamid said the provision
had led to a backlog of 56.3% of
industrial cases.