

■ HAVE YOUR SAY email your letters to voices@mediacorp.com.sg ■ JOIN THE COMMUNITY www.todayonline.com/voices

TODAY
we set you thinking
todayonline.com

MediaCorp Press Ltd
Caldecott Broadcast Centre,
Annex Building, Level 3,
Andrew Rd, Singapore 299939
Tel 6236 4888 | Fax 6534 4217
Circulation hotline 1800 698 6329
today@mediacorp.com.sg

Publisher Patrick Yong
Editor Walter Fernandez
Deputy Editor Quak Hiang Whai
Night Editor Richard J Valladares
Associate Editor Yvonne Lim
Editor-At-Large Conrad Raj
Digital Media Editor Edric Sng
News Editor Loh Chee Kong
Foreign Editor Trixia Carungcong
Sports Editor Razali Abdullah
Features Editor Phin Wong
Special Projects Editor Don Ong
Product Manager Joni Ng

MEDIACORP

MediaCorp NewsHub
TV Building, 2nd Floor, Caldecott Broadcast Centre,
Andrew Rd, Singapore 299939
Tel 6251 7671 | Fax 6251 5352
mediacorpnewshub@mediacorp.com.sg

Director Dr Chitra Rajaram
News Editors Teo Chia Leen
Mustafa Shafawi, Bhagman Singh
Derrick Paulo, Clement Mesenas
Julia Ng, Imelda Saad
Andre Yeo, Ambiga Raju
Business Editor Azhar Khalid
Sports Editors Leonard Thomas, Hakikat Rai

Life experience doesn't define competence

Letter from Marcus Tan

SINGAPOREANS have recently questioned the ability of politicians to relate to the average citizen's situation, on televised political forums and online.

While I agree that sharing similar life experiences can help policy-makers relate to ordinary Singaporeans, I feel that it does not make the former any less competent if they do not have this.

The fact that he does not suffer from the same ailments as his patients would not diminish a good doctor's ability to understand, diagnose and treat them. A competent Member of Parliament or political leader should be able to empathise with the people and provide assistance, regardless of his or her personal lifestyle.

I appreciate the fact that, while it is difficult to address every

individual's problem, our "doctors" are trying their best to prescribe "broad-spectrum antibiotics" such as Workfare and MediShield, to help alleviate some of the conditions faced by the less fortunate.

There are those — like banker and political candidate Gan Thiam Poh — who have had their fair share of hardships in life which motivated them to help others, and this will stand the people in good stead when policies are crafted.

Ultimately, the problems each person faces and how they are affected are as unique as the individual himself, and it would be impossible for anyone else to perfectly relate to their quagmire. But it is our responsibility to elect productive, compassionate policy-makers who can provide the best solutions for as many citizens as possible, so that there may be a better Singapore.

Parties should avoid places of worship

Letter from M Lukshumayeh

WATCHING the *News 5 Tonight* on Sunday, it seems that the Singapore Democratic Alliance led by the party's secretary-general included in their walkabout a Hindu temple and a Chinese temple, where they were seen distributing the party's leaflets.

While it is understandable that political parties wish to reach out to people

in every nook and cranny, it may be better to refrain from going into places of worship to disseminate their political ideologies.

Singapore has always taken the position that politics and religion should not be mixed and it is, therefore, hoped that this transgression is not repeated by all political parties. Let worshippers at places of worship undertake their prayers without unnecessary distraction.

■ CORRECTION

In the report "S'pore retail sales dip due to fall in car sales" (April 16), we reported that, excluding motor vehicles, retail sales dipped 3.5 per cent from February

last year, after a 2.5 per cent fall in January. The latter figure is incorrect. There was a 16 per cent increase in January. We apologise for the error.

What matters more than age ...

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

I REFER to the report, "The grassroots edge, with youth on its side" (April 15). Fielding a team of relatively young candidates — many in their 20s and 30s — seems like a calculated decision on the part of the People's Action Party (PAP). A new generation of Singaporeans will have the opportunity to express their political sentiments at the polling booth. Younger political candidates, with their exposure to and use of social media and online channels, may be able

to reach out and relate to their younger constituents more effectively.

Nevertheless, too much emphasis has been placed on the age and youth of the election hopefuls, instead of allowing for more holistic evaluations of their intrinsic motivations, policy positions and on-the-ground sensitivities? As a young Singaporean and stakeholder, I would not be inclined to vote for a politician on the basis of his age per se. Therefore, if age does not matter, what does?

First, constituents would be better-acquainted with individuals who have been

consistently walking the ground and seizing these opportunities to comprehend bread-and-butter concerns or community issues. Second, as potential parliamentarians, candidates should pro-actively make their voices heard. Some candidates have started to utilise online platforms to offer commentaries on substantive policy issues — such as improving healthcare for the elderly or improving the quality of education — though the reviews online have been mixed. Young Singaporeans, with their interest and access to information,

have constantly reflected the desire to be engaged in discussions on socio-economic issues that matter.

Finally, individual candidates must not be afraid to respond to questions or calls for clarification on matters related to their lives or personal decisions: Such as why join politics if the grassroots work they have been doing can be equally fulfilling, or whether the completion of National Service matters for a political candidate.

These questions matter; and Singaporeans have the right to know.



Re-employment is a win-win for both employers and employees.

