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## A vote of confidence

Letter from Kwan Jin Yao

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong's letter (May 28) establishes a positive foundation for the People's Action Party's (PAP) Members of Parliament (MPs) following the recent General Election.

Greater accountability, transparency and honesty are the order of the day, as Singaporeans — increasingly well-versed and engaged with assorted socio-economic issues — demand heightened involvement, through more wholesome and consultative mechanisms.

This initiative might herald a new era in the PAP's political rejuvenation. What is especially poignant is the point highlighted to raise parliamentary productivity, imploring elected representatives to dutifully carry out their responsibilities as parliamentarians.

PM Lee's letter should be a strong vote of confidence for the current slate of politicians and should correspondingly encourage the latter to perform with higher standards.

The aforementioned demands are magnified for newcomers, who can ill-afford to be laissez-faire in their approaches, or relish

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in the comforts of conservatism.

Expectations have been set by PM Lee himself and all must endeavour to strive harder collectively.

PM Lee's letter to his party's MPs is far from exhaustive. Given the different dynamics in Parliament, the PAP MPs should also be cognizant of their interactions and exchanges with the new Opposition MPs.

Naturally, it is imperative for them to work harmoniously with the latter — in terms of facilitating or contributing to debate on substantive issues constructively — and not attempting to disagree for the sake of doing so.

If Bills, laws or policies can achieve bipartisan consensus and cooperation, it would be a significant step forward towards political maturity in our country, as politicians put aside party politics to work for the common good of all Singaporeans.

## The Elected Presidency: We need real options

Letter from Daniel Koh Kah Soon

INTERESTINGLY, Dr Tan Cheng Bock has indicated his willingness to stand for election as the next President of Singapore. One of the reasons given is that he would like to see the election being contested and also that, as a President, he would like to be a uniting force for Singapore.

But as Mr Lim Boon Heng has observed in the report, "S'poreans might prefer a President 'not so closely related' to PAP" (May 30). Mr Lim is right. Although Dr Tan has quit his membership in the PAP, he is still too closely associated with the ruling party.

If he were to stand for election against a candidate officially endorsed by the PAP, the electorate will not have any meaningful choice. The best scenario is for someone else like Mr Ngiam Tong Dow, a former Senior Permanent Secretary with a sharp and independent mind, to avail himself as a candidate.

Although Dr Tan has on a few occasions been an outspoken MP when he took a view contrary to that put forward by the Government, we need real options and not what may be perceived as cosmetic choice.

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