

Judul : KPU Insists on November Date for Regional Heads Elections
Tanggal : Rabu, 17 Januari 2024
Surat Kabar : Jakarta Post
Halaman : 2

KPU insists on November date for regional heads elections

Yvette Tanamal

The Jakarta Post/Jakarta

The General Elections Commission (KPU) is standing firm on holding this year's simultaneous regional elections on Nov. 27, despite a recent government proposal and House of Representatives' initiative for an earlier voting day.

On Thursday, the election organizer held a public opinion hearing for three regulations, including the schedule for the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, which stipulated that they would be held on Nov. 27.

The 2016 Regional Elections Law mandated that the next regional elections for dozens of provinces and hundreds of regencies and cities would be held simultaneously in November.

While the law did not specify the date for the poll, a meeting between the KPU and House of Representatives Commission II overseeing home affairs decided that the regional elections would be held on Nov. 27.

"[Nov. 27] was picked based on the consideration that there won't be any overlap between the [regional] election process with the presidential one, therefore avoiding a pile up of election-related conflicts," KPU commis-



sioner Yulianto Sudrajat said on Thursday, as quoted by *kompas.com*.

He added that the November schedule would also grant political parties sufficient time to prepare every technical requirement needed to nominate their regional head candidates, especially if the presidential election goes to a second round.

While a presidential runoff has yet to be confirmed, recent opinion polls show no candidate pair can secure 50 percent or more of all votes across the country. If no candidate reaches the threshold during the Feb. 14 voting day, another round of voting will be held between the top-two contenders, slated for June 26.

In August 2023, reports emerged that President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo's administration was pushing a proposal to hold the regional elections earlier than scheduled and host them on two separate dates in September, a month before the President steps down.

Jokowi reportedly considered issuing a regulation in lieu of law (Perppu) in September of last year that would revise the November election date in the prevailing Re-

gional Elections Law.

The plan to issue a Perppu split the House at that time. Some parties, such as the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and Golkar Party, supported the plan, arguing that the new schedule would make the regional elections more "effective" since they would be held by the current administration, rather than the newly elected one replacing Jokowi in October.

Other parties, such as Gerindra, rejected the plan, arguing that holding the elections on an earlier date would not give enough time for the KPU to prepare for them.

While the brouhaha over the Perppu seemed to have died down following public opposition, the House Legislation Body (Baleg) agreed in a closed-door meeting during a recess in November to endorse a revision to the Regional Elections Law.

Baleg argued that earlier regional elections would help the country's presidential election system work more efficiently. Only three House factions rejected the proposal.

Election watchdogs slammed the plan. They said the plan to move the regional elections to an earlier date before Jokowi's official end of tenure in October could potentially grant the outgoing President widespread in-

fluence over the outcome of the elections, while also overloading the KPU with a hefty workload.

Some analysts said the planned amendment would potentially benefit Jokowi and his family, especially son-in-law and Medan, North Sumatra, Mayor Bobby Nasution, who is expected to run for the North Sumatra gubernatorial position, and the President's youngest son Kaesang Pangaraep who is touted to run in a mayoral election in Surakarta, Central Java.

Holding simultaneous regional elections in September could also reduce the quality of election supervision by the Elections Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu), said Titi Anggraini, election law lecturer at the University of Indonesia (UI).

"If the authorities are forced to move up the date, the quality of the regional elections will be jeopardized. It could also trigger much havoc," Titi said on Monday.

The latest draft KPU regulation on simultaneous regional elections stipulates that the registration for regional head candidates will run from May to August, while the campaign season will be from September to November. The votes will then be counted until Dec. 10. (kuk)