

**MR THOMAS CHUA, PRESIDENT OF SCCCI,  
NOMINATED MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
AT PARLIAMENT SITTING ON 15/16 AUGUST 2016**

**Ministry of Manpower: Employment Claims Bill**

1. Madam Speaker, setting up the Employment Claims Tribunal to settle conflicts between PMETS (professionals, managers, executives and technicians) and employers is a good move. However, conflicts only need to be settled because there are conflicts. We hope that employers and employees could find a way to smoothen their communication channels to avoid unnecessary conflict.
2. After this Bill has been passed, employers have to step up on their knowledge in this. Some SMEs have no HR departments, and the work of human resources is usually handled by the Administration Department, or personally taken charge of by the boss himself. PMETs will be implicated under the new legislation. Since most PMETs are well-educated, dealing with them is very different from that of blue-collar workers, in terms of concept and process. Whenever conflicts arise, and need to be raised in the tribunal, just the preparation of documents, and following up on detailed procedures, would be extremely exacting for the SMEs.
3. Hence, I really hope that this Act could form a standard reference for HR management, and that employers and PMETs could fully understand the content to avoid getting into conflicts which are impossible to mediate. At the same time, I also hope that the Employment Claims Tribunal could accurately assess which claims are reasonable and which are not reasonable at all. Local enterprises are all facing severe manpower shortage, and due to economic restructuring, every trade and industry is trying to reshuffle its resources. SMEs also hope to take the opportunity to recruit more PMETs and fully utilise their potential. However, if PMETs and employers can work together cordially, enterprises do not need to waste time and energy to address these conflicts, which only ends up aggravating the situation.
4. I also have some concern regarding the salary-related claims to be handled by the Employment Claims Tribunal. Within the company, any personnel changes, including promotions, demotions, organisational restructuring, performance appraisals, retrenchments, resignations, and other management issues, are all eventually salary-related. Then how does one differentiate between standard HR adjustments and unreasonable salary conflicts? Such cases should be carefully dealt with at the Employment Claims Tribunal, to avoid being abused by employees.