

Tsai should deliver on her pledges

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Tuesday, 14 November 2017 05:04

Since Wednesday last week, a group of volunteers has been taking turns staging a hunger strike in a park facing the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) headquarters in Taipei to urge the DPP government to pass draft amendments to the Referendum Act (公投法).

Led by the People Rule Foundation, the participants, many coming to Taipei from across the nation despite the rain and low temperatures, are taking part in the “nonviolent protest” in the hope of contributing their efforts toward the consolidation of the nation’s democratic achievements.

Their resilience should put the DPP government to shame, as it appears to be dragging its feet in steering the nation toward direct democracy.

Proposed amendments to the act that would lower the minimum age for referendum voters from 20 to 18 passed their first reading at the Legislative Yuan’s Internal Administration Committee on Dec. 15 last year, with committee members reaching a consensus on lowering voting thresholds and the majority required for passing referendums.

While the committee at the time said lawmakers would deliberate further on the issue, not even a single meeting has been convened since then.

The lack of progress not only shows negligence on the part of the lawmakers, but also suggests how little importance the DPP attaches to the issue, despite talk and pledges from party officials about upholding democratic values and deepening the nation’s democracy.

The act has been dubbed the “birdcage act” due to its extremely high threshold for a referendum to succeed, requiring the participation of at least 50 percent of the electorate and at least 50 percent of referendum voters agreeing to a proposal.

The thresholds are set so high that they practically deprive people of their right to spur governmental change through referendums, let alone the right to direct democracy.

Tsai should deliver on her pledges

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Tuesday, 14 November 2017 05:04

Calls for amending the act have been popular among DPP politicians.

In May, President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文), in her capacity as DPP chairperson, reaffirmed during a DPP Central Standing Committee meeting that the legislature would complete due legislative process to amend the act by the end of this year.

In her victory speech on the night of Jan. 16 last year, when the nation's voters handed her the presidency and her party an absolute majority in the legislature, Tsai said: "We may celebrate tonight; we may joyfully celebrate tonight, but when the sun comes up tomorrow, we are to shoulder the responsibilities for reforming the nation."

"As the DPP has the majority, we will put the maximum effort into reform," she added.

Tsai's words sounded sincere then, but words that are not followed by concrete action are just words.

December is around the corner, but the proposed amendments to the act are sitting idly at the legislature.

After winning the presidency, Tsai called on DPP members and people in her administration to be "humble, humble and humble" while in power.

Hopefully, Tsai will revisit her own words and remember her solemn pledges to the public in terms of pushing for reform and consolidating the nation's democracy.

If Tsai and her fellow DPP politicians remember their campaign promises only when election time comes around, then the Tsai administration would be no different from the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT), which is known for only making empty promises.

Tsai should deliver on her pledges

Written by Taipei Times Editorial
Tuesday, 14 November 2017 05:04

Source: [Taipei Times - Editorials 2017/11/14](#)