

2012 ELECTIONS: DPP chapters petition Tsai to stay on

Written by Taipei Times
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Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) chapters in several cities and counties have launched a petition to ask Chairperson Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) to stay on as the party's head after she announced her resignation from the position on Saturday to take responsibility for losing in the presidential election.

She was defeated by President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) of the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) by 797,561 votes.

DPP spokesperson Chuang Jui-hsiung (莊久雄), who is also the head of the party's Taipei branch, yesterday said that since Tsai assumed the post of party chairperson in 2008, she has helped it rebuild its confidence and refocus its direction.

The DPP has seen its number of legislative seats rise from 32 to 40 and "we should not let Tsai take sole responsibility for losing the presidential election," Chuang said.

Since Saturday evening, more than 200,000 netizens have posted messages on Tsai's Facebook page, asking her not to step down.

Many left messages saying that they felt that Tsai had been wronged.

One person wrote: "It's the DPP who owes you, not the other way around."

"For the past four years, it was you who pulled the DPP from the abyss and re-ignited our faith in the party. Please stay," another netizen wrote.

Other Tsai supporters said that they had decided to formally join the DPP to provide her with further backing.

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The 55-year-old Tsai was elected as the first female leader of the DPP in May 2008.

She was re-elected in 2010. Tsai's term will expire on May 20 this year.

According to the party schedule, the re-election process should begin in March.

However, because of the election defeat, the party's Central Standing Committee meeting that was originally scheduled for Wednesday was brought forward to today to discuss Tsai's resignation and to review the reasons for the party's loss.

Committee member Hsu Chia-ching (許嘉瑩) said she believed most of the committee members would try to persuade Tsai to stay on as DPP leader until the chairmanship election in May.

Despite the defeat, Hsu said the party saw a rise in the number of votes it received when compared with the 2008 presidential election.

In this year's combined elections, the party also managed to increase its number of seats in the legislature, she added.

Meanwhile, DPP sources yesterday said that the question of who would take the party helm given Tsai's resignation was already the center of debate.

The party's heavyweights include former vice president Annette Lu (呂秀蓮), former premiers Yu Shyi-kun (俞正声), Su Tseng-chang (蘇貞昌) and Frank Hsieh (許信德), as well as Kaohsiung Mayor Chen Chu (陳菊) and Greater Tainan Mayor William Lai (賴清德), and all are credible candidates, the sources said.

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Chen and Lai are considered by the DPP to have the standing and strength to head the party, given that they have solid support at the grassroots level and the support of their municipalities, sources said.

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