

Constitutional reform 'almost impossible,' TSU says

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While the New Power Party (NPP) caucus had proposed constitutional amendments, the Taiwan Solidarity Union (TSU) yesterday said that constitutional reform is a “false issue” because amending the Constitution has been made almost impossible, and only establishing a new constitution altogether would help Taiwan.

“Constitutional amendment is a false issue, because amendments passed in 2005 made it almost impossible to amend the Constitution,” TSU spokeswoman Chou Ni-an (周尼安) told a news conference in Taipei yesterday.

“According to constitutional amendments [passed in 2005], endorsements from one-quarter of the legislators, or 29 seats, are required to propose a constitutional amendment, three-quarters of the legislators, or 85 seats, must attend the meeting [to propose an amendment] and three-quarters of those who attend the meeting, or 64 seats, must agree to the proposal,” Chou said. “After the amendment proposal passed the first phase, it would be put to a public referendum within six months after its proposal.”

For the amendment proposal to pass the referendum, 50 percent of the total number of eligible voters must vote “yes,” Chou said.

Chou said that as the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) holds an absolute majority in the legislature, the party should help to revise the Referendum Act (公投法) to lower the threshold for referendums on constitutional amendments.

“The TSU would then work with civil society to push for creating a new constitution,” she said.

TSU Department of Social Movements director Chang Chao-lin (張朝麟) said that while the party supports constitutional amendments proposed by the NPP to lower the voting age from 20 to 18 and abolish the Taiwan Provincial Government, “they [the NPP] overlooked the high threshold passed in the seventh constitutional reform [in 2005].”

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Chang said that the majority of Taiwanese voted for the more Taiwan-oriented DPP because they expected the party to create a better environment for Taiwan to become a new and independent nation.

“Creating a new Constitution through a referendum is the best way to keep Taiwan independent, protect the people’s rights and fight against China’s ambitions on Taiwan,” Chang said. “We should not waste time on impossible constitutional reform.”

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