

People who identify as independents hit all-time high: poll

Written by Taiwan Tati Cultural & Educational Foundation
Monday, 16 July 2018 06:54 -

Both the pan-green and pan-blue camps are losing supporters, while the number of independent voters has reached an unprecedented high, a poll released yesterday by the Taiwanese Public Opinion Foundation showed.

The survey found that 57.3 percent of Taiwanese say the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) should be replaced by a third party.

According to the poll, 25.2 percent of respondents said they identified with the DPP and 20.7 percent said they identified with the KMT, while 49.6 percent identified as independent voters.

Compared with a similar poll conducted last month, the support ratings for the pan-green and pan-blue camps have fallen 4.3 and 2.5 percent respectively, while the number of independent voters increased by 5.9 percent, the foundation told a news conference.

The poll asked respondents to compare the two parties in 10 areas. The DPP received more favorable results in seven of them: “ready and willing to push for reforms,” “committed to the protection of freedom and human rights,” “committed to environmental protection,” “having political ideals,” “having integrity,” “willing to act in the best interest of Taiwanese” and “willing to act in the best interest of the people.”

The DPP performed best in the category “ready and willing to push for reforms,” with 45.9 percent of respondents saying the description best characterized the party, compared with 14.1 percent who said it better fit the KMT, the foundation said.

The KMT received more favorable results in three areas: “ability to run the nation,” “ability to improve the nation’s economy” and “ability to handle cross-strait relations,” the foundation said.

The KMT led by a significant margin in the areas of economy and cross-strait relations, by 22.5 and 47.7 percentage points respectively, it said.

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The poll also found that President Tsai Ing-wen's (蔡英文) approval rating remained low, with 49 percent of respondents saying they do not approve of the way she runs the nation, compared with 33 percent who said they do.

Premier William Lai's (賴清德) approval rating has not improved either, with those who approve and disapprove of him tied at 42 percent, the survey found.

While the poll was conducted between Monday and Wednesday last week, before Lai announced a Cabinet reshuffle that is to take effect today, such plans usually do not affect an administration's approval rating immediately, foundation chairman You Ying-lung (游盈隆) said.

Although the number of people who identify as independent voters has been increasing, it remains to be seen whether they will actually vote for a third party, National Taiwan Normal University associate professor Chuang Chia-yin (莊佳音) said.

The DPP has blamed its low approval ratings on its push for reforms, when they are actually the result of poor policies, political commentator Chan Hsi-kui (陳希奎) said.

"The government must have something to offer other than reform. While it has been reforming various things, some very basic things, such as the economy and cross-strait relations, have been ignored," he said.

The poll collected 1,070 valid responses via random telephone interviews, and has a margin of error of 3 percentage points.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2018/07/16](#)