

Students urge boycott of CtiTV

Written by Taipei Times

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Students at two of the nation's top universities are calling for a boycott of CtiTV News (中視新聞) in protest against what they called "biased news coverage."

A National Taiwan University (NTU) student launched the initiative on the university's official Facebook page urging the school to ban broadcasts of CtiTV News at all student cafeterias due to its "biased" coverage, adding that students expect to be able to access quality media content on campus.

The student also talked about the possibility of holding a referendum on campus on whether to ban CtiTV broadcasts on campus, if the initiative is supported by more than 1,000 people.

As of press time last night, the initiative has garnered the support of more than 4,000 people.

A group of students at National Chengchi University (NCCU) are also urging their schoolmates to "take back the TV remote controls" at school cafeterias, after it was reported that a resident near the university would enter school cafeterias, take the remote control, switch the channel to CtiTV News and leave.

The post on the resident's behavior drew nearly 200 comments from students, with some saying that "CtiTV is reaching its claws into university campuses."

Others proposed switching to Formosa TV News instead or removing the numbers "5" and "2" from the remote control, as CtiTV News is on Channel 52 on cable.

National Taiwan University Student Association president Michelle Wu (吳欣瑩) said that while she understands that students are angry about TV news channels that do not follow journalists' code of ethics and spread misinformation, the university might be accused of imposing a gag order if it unilaterally bans broadcasts of CtiTV News.

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To protect freedom of speech on campus, the association has reached an agreement with caterers of school cafeterias that students should be allowed to choose the channels they want to watch while dining there, she said.

The association would also respect students' right to launch a referendum initiative on banning CtiTV News on campus, but the university does not have any regulation to legalize such action, she said.

The university administration is also not obligated to enforce it, she added.

"Personally, I do not read *China Times* or watch CtiTV because of its biased news coverage and [reports] heaping praises on a certain politician. However, banning certain TV news stations would hurt the university's reputation of being a free and democratic academic institution. It is better to use practical actions — switching channels — to boycott CtiTV," she said.

NCCU said that a fight over a remote control at a school cafeteria happened on Friday last week, when two or three students quarreled with a woman who insisted on watching CtiTV News.

The university said that its cafeterias are run by outside caterers and the televisions are provided for in-house diners, which include students, staff and local residents.

The televisions at the cafeterias are usually tuned into the Public Television Service channel and sports channels, it said, adding that diners are free to switch channels as they see fit.

CtiTV News was fined NT\$200,000 in January by the National Communications Commission for failing to fact-check its reports about then-Kaohsiung mayoral candidate Chen Chi-mai's (陳其邁) rally in Cishan District (旗山) in November last year.

The commission today is scheduled to review complaints against a CtiTV news report, in which a farmer claimed that 2 million tonnes of pomeloes were dumped into the Zengwen

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Reservoir because of plummeting prices.

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