

## Chen won't plead guilty, ex-lawyer says

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Former president Chen Shui-bian will not plead guilty to the charges against him despite his family members being prosecuted, Chen's former lawyer Cheng Wen-lung said yesterday.

Cheng visited Chen yesterday at the Taipei Detention Center, where Chen has been held on corruption charges since Dec. 30 last year.

"[Chen] thinks he has not done anything illegal, so why should he plead guilty?" the lawyer said, referring to a letter former first lady Wu Shu-jen wrote to her husband reportedly reprimanding him for insisting on being a martyr even though it would ruin their daughter Chen Hsing-yu's plans to live and study in the US this fall.

Chen Hsing-yu was barred from leaving the country last Tuesday, after she, her husband, Chao Chien-ming, and her brother, Chen Chih-chung, admitted to giving false testimony during investigations into the former first family's alleged corruption and money laundering.

Chen Shui-bian has been distressed since learning that prosecutors rejected his daughter's request to be allowed to travel so she could register for studies in the US.

"[He] hopes his children would not be involved in the political fighting among adults. He hopes his children would not be hassled," Cheng said, adding that his former client told him that "adults should resolve their political issues among themselves."

Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) Taipei City councilors yesterday urged the media not to bother Chen Shui-bian's grandson Chao Yi-an, and demanded Taipei City's Education Department protect the boy's rights to study in a municipal school.

Chao Yi-an's enrollment in the Bo Ai Elementary School became the center of attention after several users of the school's online message board, who identified themselves as teachers and parents, voiced objections to the possibility of his entering the school.

The six-year-old is the eldest son of Chen Hsing-yu. He has reached the minimum school age, according to the National Education Act, and is legally entitled to enroll in the school.

DPP Taipei City Councilor Chien Yu-yen said the National Communications Commission should stop media outlets from following the boy or interviewing students or teachers at the school about the issue.

"We urge the media to exercise self-restraint and not to follow Chao Yi-an around, so that he can go to school happily," she told a press conference at the Taipei City Council.

Independent Taipei City Councilor Chen Chien-ming demanded the department and the school protect the boy's right to study in Taipei.

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"It would be shameful for the education field in Taipei if Chao was forced to attend school in Kaohsiung instead because of political factors," he said.

Lin Hsin-yao, chief secretary of the department, said the school would "definitely welcome Chao to enroll."

Wang Jen-yu, director-general of the school's academic affairs department, said that any child whose household record is registered within the school's district was welcome to attend.

Meanwhile, swamped by reporters on her way to work yesterday, Chen Hsing-yu lost her temper when asked to comment on efforts to study in the US.

"Don't push me!" "All of you will be punished!" she said as she was escorted by supporters into the dental clinic where she works.

Her brother said later yesterday that the whole family hoped that Chen Hsing-yu would move her family to Kaohsiung City, where her son could attend a local school.

Chen Chih-chung and his wife moved to Kaohsiung in February, while his mother moved there in May.

In related news, prosecutors announced yesterday they will call Wu for questioning on Tuesday on whether she solicited her children to commit perjury.

Wu's lawyer Lin Chih-chung said yesterday that Wu had said she would cooperate with prosecutors to protect her children.

"[Wu] said she will do whatever prosecutors ask of her, as long as prosecutors do not involve her children in the case," Lin said.

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