

Alliance names lawmaker as first candidate for recall

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Neil Peng, left, and film director Ko I-chen, the initiators of the Constitution 133 Alliance hold up a sign with the letters BMW during a press conference yesterday. The letters stand for bamian wu, which is Chinese for “recall Wu [Yusheng].”

Photo: CNA

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Wu Yu-sheng (吳瑜生) was yesterday named as the first candidate for a civic group’s recall campaign because of his consistent alignment with President and KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) rather than with the public he is meant to serve, according to the group.

The Constitution 133 Alliance, recently established with the goal of recalling legislators it sees as incompetent, told a press conference that it would soon launch a recall campaign against Wu, a former KMT caucus whip who is known to be one of Ma’s confidants.

“Recalling Wu will be a difficult task, but we’re still going to try to accomplish what would be the first time in history that Taiwanese exercise their right to recall elected officials,” said award-winning author Neil Peng (彭國治), one of the founders of the alliance.

Recalling Wu requires the support of at least one-half of the eligible voters in his constituency, which includes six New Taipei City (新北市) districts: Sanjhih (三芝), Shihmen (石門), Tamsui (淡水), Bali (八里), Linkou (林口) and Taishan (泰山).

Before that, the alliance would have to collect the signatures of at least 2 percent of the total electorate in Wu’s district to propose the bid and the joint petition from another 13 percent of the total voters for the proposal to be legitimate.

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However, the alliance was determined to initiate the campaign nicknamed the “BMW Movement,” which Peng said stood for bamian Wu (爛扁), which means “recall Wu” in Chinese.

The nickname also refers to Wu’s extramarital affairs, reported in November 2011, when the lawmaker was photographed by the media in a BMW sports utility vehicle with his mistress.

The alliance accused Wu of nine “bad deeds,” including providing staunch support to Ma’s unpopular policies on electricity and fuel price increases, nuclear energy and US beef imports, as well as his pro-China position and opposition to the movement against monopolization of the media.

Because the threshold of recalling a president is high, the alliance said it was forced to resort to recalling lawmakers to express the public’s anger about the way the administration was ignoring its mandate.

“In unusual circumstances, people have no choice but to resort to unusual measures,” film director and alliance co-founder Ko I-chen (柯一辰) said.

The alliance said the recall campaign against Wu was only the beginning, but did not disclose the next step.

KMT lawmakers are likely to be primary targets as the KMT caucus was the only party caucus which refused to sign letters of commitment sent by the alliance to distance itself from Ma.

Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌), a researcher at Academia Sinica, expects the alliance to launch the signature drive at about the start of the next legislative session next month and the best time to vote on the proposal would be in early December.

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However, the alliance faces time constraints as it only has one month to collect the signatures of 13 percent of the total voters once it secures the 2 percent to initiate the proposal, which was why it called for people to volunteer for advocacy works and collecting signatures.

“The best scenario would be for the campaign to create pressure on KMT lawmakers in the new legislative session and force the KMT to change its position on the construction of the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant in New Taipei City’s Gongliao District (公寮), and the cross-strait service trade agreement,” Huang said.

If that occurs, “the Taiwanese win even if the recall campaign fails,” Huang said.

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