

## Students issue statement

Written by Taipei Times  
Thursday, 20 March 2014 07:39 -

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The hundreds of students and demonstrators occupying the legislative chamber have issued a statement detailing their stance against the cross-strait service trade pact, stressing a demand for a fair and competitive future for young Taiwanese.

“We do not want to see young people still living on a NT\$22,000 salary [a subsidization policy implemented by the government that gives NT\$22,000 to university graduates as a starting salary] 10 years from now,” the statement read.

It said Taiwan is a haven for entrepreneurship, where young people can fulfill their dreams by opening coffee shops or personal workshops and become a “boss” by working hard on their own.

An academic assessment on the impact of signing the pact showed that more than 1,000 trades — covering basic necessities like food, clothing, housing, traffic and different stages of life from birth to death — will be affected, although the pact only listed 64 sub-sectors for opening up to Chinese investment, the students’ statement said.

“In the future, Taiwanese small and medium-sized enterprises will face challenges from competition with Chinese-invested companies that have abundant capital and use vertically integrated business models,” it said. “It will also threaten the survival of office workers, farmers, blue-collar workers and businesspeople.”

It said the pact would also impose a threat to the nation’s freedom of speech, by opening up Internet portal sites and Web sites, as well as printing, publishing and distribution channels to Chinese investment.

“Standing against the pact is not an act of ‘always being against anything related to China’ (□□□□),” it said.

The trade agreement’s greatest problem is that it only benefits the large capitalists, by allowing

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big corporations to expand without limit across the Strait, while small businesses suffer, it said. “The entrepreneurship haven that we used to be proud of will be gradually taken over by foreign corporations.”

The statement said that the issue is not an argument between unification and independence, or between the pan-blue and the pan-green camps, but one between social classes — a harsh survival problem for young people when facing a few large companies that gobble up small businesses in the agricultural, industrial and commercial sectors.

“We strongly protest against the President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) administration — which now has a low approval rating — seizing the legislature to have it approve the service pact in such a violent way and giving away the nation’s future,” the statement said.

It also condemned what the students said was Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Chang Ching-chung’s (張景淳) sudden call on Monday to end a committee meeting and arbitrarily conclude that the review was finished and approved because of it was taking too long.

It said Chang’s conclusion was a total betrayal of the legislature’s promise to review the agreement item-by-item, which was agreed to in June last year.

“If the KMT can violently approve a pact that has great impact on the public by circumventing the legislature’s supervision and substantial review, other policies that might more greatly affect economic autonomy can also be approved in the same way,” it said. “Taiwan’s future cannot be forfeited like this.”

“We want to master our own future ... we want a fair environment that allows young people to develop and compete,” the statement read.

The demonstrators are young people who are willing to take on challenges, but they will not abide unfair conditions that will lead them to being controlled by few ruling officials or large companies, it said.

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“Taiwan is where we live and make a living,” the statement said in its last paragraph. “To stop this unfair and unjust service pact, to stop the political party that is trying to restore authoritarianism and is trampling our legal institutions, please stand with us and protect Taiwan together.”

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