

Groups urge referendum reform, lawmaker recalls

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Taiwan March cofounders Chen Wei-ting, center, and Huang Kuo-chang, left, hold a demonstration at the Miramar Plaza in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

Activist groups yesterday campaigned at the Miramar Plaza in Taipei's Dazhi area to call for amendments to the Referendum Act (公投法) and recalling legislators they say are not doing their jobs.

Taiwan March (台灣大遊行) leader Chen Wei-ting (陳偉霆) said that President Ma Ying-jeou (馬英九) administration's response to the public's demands across a range of issues has been to hold a national affairs conference on economics and trade and establish a youth advisory group for the Executive Yuan.

Yet while the moves seem to give the impression that the Ma administration is seeking public opinions, it is ignoring calls by groups to hold a "civic constitutional conference."

Chen said that Taiwan March echoes the Appendectomy Project's (割除法案) appeal for a rectification of the Referendum Act, as well the recalling of legislators whom the campaign singled out as failing the public and following only the president's instructions.

The name of the recall campaign is a play on words since in Chinese, the term for pan-blue lawmakers, lan wei (藍委), is homophonous with the word for "appendix" (附錄).

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Only through direct democracy can the nation prevent a behind-closed-doors political meeting between the Ma administration and the Chinese government from taking place, Chen said.

Taiwan March cofounder Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) added that Taiwanese have been disappointed with the representative democracy model employed in the country.

Public policy has been gradually spinning out of control, Huang said, pointing to the Control Yuan nominations fiasco as an example.

The Legislative Yuan on Friday ended a three-week extraordinary session without managing to hold a vote on the list of 29 Control Yuan nominees put forward by Ma, after Democratic Progressive Party and Taiwan Solidarity Union lawmakers blocked the procedure over misgivings about several of the candidates' qualifications and that some of the nominations were Ma's way of rewarding his confidants.

Huang yesterday described the list as the worst in Control Yuan history, adding however that Ma was adamant in trying to force his will on the Legislative Yuan.

"When public representatives have gone against the expectations of the people they are meant to serve — and in some cases even lied to them — we must use the power of the Constitution to legally 'overthrow' these false representatives," Huang said.

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