

2014 ELECTIONS: Sunday rally to back demands for political reforms

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Representatives of Taiwan March, Taiwan Inversion and the Appendectomy Project yesterday announce a rally to be held on Sunday next to the Legislative Yuan in Taipei to back various demands for political reform.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

Several groups are planning to hold a mass rally next to the Legislative Yuan on Sunday to call for an end to what they say is the hereditary control of local politics and to back demands for reform of the Referendum Act (公投法).

Organizers, including Taiwan March, Taiwan Inversion and the Appendectomy Project, said the nation's electoral politics require a major overhaul to ensure channels for direct democracy.

Chen Wei-ting (陳為廷), a member of Taiwan March and one of the leaders of the Sunflower movement's 23-day occupation of the legislature's main chamber in March and early April, called on the public to support calls to reform the Referendum Act.

Chen urged supporters to "return to Jinan Road" in Taipei on Sunday to back demands for direct democracy.

"Under our current political system, citizens are rarely capable of monitoring the actions of politicians," Chen told a news conference in Taipei, adding that despite public opposition, President Ma Ying-jeou's (馬英九) administration has continued to promote cross-strait trade agreements.

Citing what they said is the large number of candidates in local councilor elections whose

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family members hold political office, the activists also urged for the public to demand an end to hereditary control of local politics.

“There is nothing wrong about coming from a family with a political background, however, such candidates often face a lower barrier to entry [into politics] and have more resources in their quest for political office, so they deserve more public scrutiny,” said Urda Yen (葉宇達), a member of Taiwan Inversion, a movement that aims to raise the quality of Taiwanese politics.

About one-third of the candidates for city councilor posts in Taipei come from families with political backgrounds, Yen said.

Yen urged supporters to participate in an online vote to determine the “top 10 dominant political families” in Taiwan.

Meanwhile, the Appendectomy Project also announced that it plans to launch a recall campaign against three Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) lawmakers, with the signature collection to be launched on Nov. 29 to coincide with nine-in-one elections.

The project said the trio — Lin Hung-chih (林宏智), Wu Yu-sheng (吳育生) and Alex Tsai (蔡啟芳), who also serves KMT Taipei mayoral candidate Sean Lien’s (連戰) campaign director — have failed the public by adhering solely to Ma’s instructions.

“Never in the history of Taiwanese electoral politics has an elected representative been recalled by the people,” an Appendectomy Project representative surnamed Lin (林) said. “We need to set an example, right on election day.”

The name “Appendectomy Project” was chosen for both the group and the recall campaign because in Mandarin Chinese, the term for blue-camp legislators, *lan wei* (藍委) is pronounced the same as “appendix” (盲腸).

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