

A-bian to make new petition for parole

Written by Taipei Times

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Former president Chen Shui-bian's mother, Chen Li Shen, center, yesterday weeps at a press conference at the Democratic Progressive Party's office in Greater Tainan as she urged the government to release her son from prison on compassionate grounds.

Photo: CNA

Former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) is to apply to the Ministry of Justice for medical parole after his latest examination showed that his deteriorating state of health meets the criteria for medical parolees, his son, Chen Chih-chung (陳志強), said yesterday, even though the ministry on Monday had denied that his condition meets the requirements for such a parole.

Chen Chih-chung said his family made the decision after the Taichung Veterans General Hospital examined his father on Nov. 4.

Minister of Justice Luo Ying-shay (羅英祥) on Monday said that Chen Shui-bian does not qualify for medical parole. However, she said that he had three options.

Luo said Chen could file another appeal to the Taipei District Court or lodge an objection with the Taiwan High Court against the decision by the ministry's Agency of Corrections in October to reject his parole request.

The corrections agency on Oct. 29 rejected the request for parole, and Chen filed an appeal with the Taipei District Court. The court dismissed his appeal on Nov. 26.

Luo also said that Chen Shui-bian could apply to be diagnosed by the corrections agency,

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which could then consider including physicians recommended by his family on the health exam team.

Chen Chih-chung said that the motions the ministry proposed “take time and we do not have much time to spare.”

“Another point is that all these motions might in the end be referred back to the ministry due to their politically sensitive nature anyway,” he added.

Taipei Veterans General Hospital physician Kuo Cheng-deng (郭成登) — a member of the former president’s volunteer medical team — said it is “utter nonsense” for the ministry to claim that Chen Shui-bian does not need medical parole because he “keeps a normal schedule, and is eating and drinking regularly.”

“You might as well ask the Taipei Veterans General Hospital to discharge all patients other than those in its intensive care unit and emergency room,” he said.

Kuo said the ministry was “lying” when it said that Taichung Prison is “capable of handling Chen Shui-bian’s health concerns,” because the facility does not have any medical staff and even the caretakers are not properly trained in medical care.

The Nov. 4 exam found that Chen Shui-bian had shown symptoms of choking, the cause of which could be neurodegeneration, Kuo said, adding that the choking could cause sudden death by suffocation.

Chen Shui-bian’s urinary incontinence has worsened and he suffers incontinence more than 80 times a day, Kuo said, adding that his other ailments include sleep apnea, which has persisted despite surgery for it, major depression and benign prostate hyperplasia — non-cancerous enlargement of the prostate.

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The Democratic Progressive Party's branch in Greater Tainan yesterday held a press conference at which the former president's 88-year-old mother, Chen Li Shen (陳麗珍), called on the government to "let me be together with my son again."

In tears, she said it has been heartbreaking for her to see her son emaciated and afflicted with all kinds of ailments after he was put behind bars.

"I'm afraid that I may never be with him again" if he does not get out soon, she said.

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