

Top Sunflower joins NPP, eyes legislative run

Written by Taipei Times

Tuesday, 05 May 2015 07:52 -

Academia Sinica researcher and Sunflower movement leader Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) yesterday announced his decision to become a member of the New Power Party (NPP), urging more young people to join the political party launched in January by prominent social activists.

Huang, who played a central role in the Sunflower movement protests last year, told a news conference in Taipei that he remained undecided over whether to enter next year's legislative contest.

He said that he was considering an NPP candidacy in two constituencies: Taipei's District 4, covering Neihu (內湖) and Nangang (南港) districts; or New Taipei City's District 12, covering Sijhih District (汐止) and six others along the nation's northeastern coast.

Saying that grassroots organizations from both constituencies have contacted him to encourage him to join the race, Huang remained tight-lipped about a final decision, saying that it was very difficult for him to terminate his career in academia.

He ruled out being listed as a legislator-at-large candidate for the NPP.

Huang also dismissed media speculation that he might replace NPP legislative candidate Hu Po-yen (胡波堃) in New Taipei City's Yonghe (永和) and Zhonghe (中和) districts.

On Tuesday last week, Hu announced his decision to withdraw from the race, but deleted the post from Facebook about 30 minutes later.

In the deleted post, Hu said he was willing to make way for Huang in his legislative bid to oust Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) Legislator Chang Ching-chung (張景雲), who gained notoriety after his attempt last year to ram a proposed trade pact with China through the legislature, which triggered the Sunflower movement.

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According to a report by the Chinese-language news site Storm Media, Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) members in Yonghe were more willing to support Huang's candidacy, as they consider Hu a weaker candidate.

Huang yesterday said that it was not up to the DPP to decide where he should run for legislator.

The nation needs "a second pro-localization party as a vehicle of progressive values to speed up the process of eliminating the KMT, and to maintain a relationship of constructive competition with the DPP," Huang said.

In other developments yesterday, several NPP legislative candidates expressed their commitment to staying in the race despite mounting pressure from the DPP and rival minor parties founded by social activists.

NPP legislative candidate Chiu Hsien-chih (邱顯奇) expressed his misgivings about his prospective rival in Hsinchu City, DPP caucus whip Ker Chien-ming (柯建銘), saying Ker's record in the legislature went against the NPP's beliefs in political transparency.

"The problem is that we are no longer able to find stimulating discussions in parliament, because they have been replaced by intra-party caucus negotiations," Chiu said. "We can say that caucus negotiations have eviscerated the true spirit of representational politics."

"We encountered discrepancies in terms of our fundamental values with the KMT's [Legislative Speaker] Wang Jin-pyng (王金平) or Ker, so it is not like we have anything against him personally," he added, reiterating his decision to continue his campaign as long as Ker represented the DPP.

NPP candidate author Neil Peng (彭振宇) called for televised debates between himself and any prospective DPP candidates in New Taipei City's District 1, which covers the districts of Tamsui (淡水), Sanjhih (三芝), Shihmen (石門), Bali (八里), Taishan (泰山) and Linkou (林口).

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Peng said that televised debates should take place before any opinion polls are conducted to decide which party backs out of the race.

He added that NPP candidates are severely disadvantaged due to a lack of campaign funding compared with members of the DPP and KMT incumbent Wu Yu-sheng (吳瑜生).

Also yesterday, NPP founder Freddy Lim (林錫山) said the party is willing to cooperate with other political parties on legislator-at-large nomination strategies — such as formulating a joint nomination list with the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2015/05/05](#)