

DPP betraying reform vows, NPP says

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New Power Party Executive Chairman Huang Kuo-chang reacts at a meeting of the legislature's Social Welfare and Environmental Hygiene Committee at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday after an announcement that his party's motion would not be considered.

Photo: Chien Jung-fong, Taipei Times

Procedural moves by the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to push through controversial amendments to the Labor Standards Act (勞基法) have betrayed promises for congressional reform, New Power Party (NPP) Executive Chairman Huang Kuo-chang (黃國昌) said yesterday.

At a meeting of the legislature's Social Welfare and Environmental Hygiene Committee, the committee's DPP majority confirmed the minutes of an Oct. 5 meeting, in which amendments to the act were reviewed.

Committee co-convenor Wu Yu-chin (吳玉珍) of the DPP refused to consider a NPP motion demanding discussion of purported procedural flaws at the earlier meeting.

NPP legislators sat quietly on the sidelines during an initial fracas between DPP and Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) lawmakers at the opening of the meeting, but Huang made a start for the front of the room after Wu announced that his party's resolution would not be considered and was visibly agitated afterward, shedding tears.

"I was absolutely shocked when [Wu] announced that she would not consider the motion," Huang said. "It is unacceptable that she was not even willing to address such an important procedural question."

“What right does [the DPP] have to refuse to deal with this?” he asked. “Does it think that the Legislative Yuan is a company it manages?”

The NPP’s motion called for the committee’s move to send draft amendments directly to cross-caucus negotiations to be invalidated, citing what was reportedly a mistake by co-convenor Chen Ying (陳瑗) of the DPP in reading the sending resolution.

Rather than reading the sending resolution itself, Chen repeated the title and text of an earlier resolution, invalidating the vote, Huang said, adding that current meeting minutes falsely imply a unanimous agreement to the earlier resolution to cut off discussions.

“Today’s meeting was a shameless display, because they did not dare accept scrutiny,” he said.

“The issue now is not just about the DPP’s plans for a five-day workweek, the problem is the future direction of the legislature,” NPP caucus convener Hsu Yung-ming (許毓興) said. “Over the past two days, we have felt like we are in hell — not because of all the conflict, but because it appears that all of our efforts to push congressional reforms have been lost in a new vicious cycle.”

Opposition to allowing details of major legislation to be determined in “opaque cross-caucus negotiations” was a key plank of the NPP’s legislative platform, with the party advocating “committee-centric” reviews of bills to increase transparency.

In related news, prominent Sunflower movement leader Wang Yi-kai (王宜凱) attempted to storm the Legislative Yuan last night to protest the confirmation of the meeting minutes, but was swiftly intercepted by police, attracting a crowd of people in response to an online call to action.

Most of the crowd stood aside and watched as he charged down Jinan Road and attempted to use a ladder to scale the Legislative Yuan’s low eastern wall, but a handful of people joined him

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in a sit-in in the middle of the intersection of Zhongshan S and Jinan roads after he was released by police.

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