

KMT occupies podium over agenda

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Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) lawmakers yesterday occupy the speaker's podium at the Legislative Yuan in Taipei amid a dispute over the legislative agenda.

Photo: Chang Chia-ming, Taipei Times

The Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) caucus yesterday protested against the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucus' "authoritarian gesture" of restricting the legislative discussion agenda to bills proposed by the DPP caucus.

More than a dozen KMT lawmakers occupied the speaker's podium, lambasting the DPP for "blocking the KMT's right to propose changes to the legislative agenda."

The Procedure Committee on Tuesday failed to reach a consensus on the discussion agenda slated to be dealt with in the next plenary session and left it to the general assembly to decide yesterday.

"At 8:45am we entered the chamber and found this agenda proposal," KMT caucus convener Sufin Siluko (蘇芬) said on the podium, holding a piece of paper.

The DPP caucus' agenda proposal contains 19 items and states that the discussion agenda for the meeting should be "limited" to those items and be processed "in the order shown," he said.

"Can the legislative proceeding be restricted by a single caucus like this? We will continue to stand on the podium if the DPP caucus does not retract its agenda proposal," he said. "What kind of democratic system is this?"

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“The DPP, now the majority party in the legislature, has no respect for minority opposition parties. The wording they used — ‘limited’ and ‘in the order shown’ — revealed their dictatorial and hegemonic mentality,” KMT Legislator Alicia Wang (王淑娟) said.

She accsed the DPP caucus of trying to bar opposition parties from motioning changes to the agenda.

KMT lawmakers held placards accusing Legislative Speaker Su Jia-chyuan (蘇嘉全) of being partial and called the DPP “overbearing” for precluding the opposition’s right to make proposals.

One of the placards read: DPP lawmakers helped student protesters “guard the legislative chamber before the election and then manhandled them out of the chamber afterward.”

DPP lawmakers guarded the legislative chamber’s doors during students’ occupation of the premises in 2014 — as lawmakers are protected by law against eviction by police — but on Tuesday they had police evict protesters from DPP caucus convener Ker Chien-ming’s (柯建銘) office after they occupied it to protest against the DPP’s proposal to cancel seven national holidays to accommodate a 40-hour workweek.

Lawmakers have been scuffling over proposed amendments to the Labor Standards Act (勞基法), the DPP caucus’ version of which proposes “one fixed rest day and one flexible day off” after five workdays and seeks to scrap seven national holidays.

The KMT and the New Power Party are opposed to the proposal.

Sufin said the KMT caucus earlier yesterday was about to agree to Ker’s suggestion that public hearings be held by the caucuses of the parties in the legislature to reach a consensus about the proposed amendments.

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“However, we later saw the 19-item agenda, so we changed tactics,” he said.

At about 4pm, with the podium still occupied by KMT lawmakers, a group of high-school students on a field trip entered at the legislative chamber.

KMT Legislator Ko Chih-en (柯昌恩), a former educator, told the students why the lawmakers had to intervene in the legislative procedure by occupying the podium.

“I am sorry that you had to witness this today, but this does not happen often,” she said.

KMT caucus secretary-general Johnny Chiang (江丙坤) told the students that the democratic lesson was that while the majority rules, the minority has to be respected as well.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30pm without any bills having been reviewed or passed, which meant that DPP and KMT lawmakers’ proposed amendments to regulate same-sex marriage, which were on yesterday’s agenda, failed to get their first readings.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2016/11/05](#)