

NPP urges Cabinet again to talk labor law amendments

Written by Taipei Times

Wednesday, 15 November 2017 07:18 -

The New Power Party (NPP) yesterday reiterated its doubts over draft labor law amendments, saying there is no need to revise the Labor Standards Act (勞基法), which has raised the average salary and lowered total working hours without affecting the nation's competitiveness.

Following the implementation of the "one fixed day off and one flexible rest day" workweek law in December last year, the average salary has increased and total working hours have been reduced without affecting business competitiveness, NPP Legislator Kawlo Iyun Pacidal said.

However, the Cabinet on Thursday last week put forward draft amendments to relax overtime rules and lower the minimum rest time between shifts, a move that puzzled and disappointed the NPP, Kawlo said.

"There is no need to revise the law," she said, adding that the ministry has not explained how its amendments would benefit workers.

The NPP last week urged Minister of Labor Lin Mei-chu (林美珠) to negotiate with the party over the proposed legislation, but the ministry did not reply.

The NPP yesterday again called for negotiations.

The ministry did not respond to the party's request for workplace statistics or labor inspection data, but the NPP needs the information to evaluate the necessity of the legislation, NPP Legislator Hsu Yung-ming (許毓仁) said.

"The minister does not communicate with us. The ministry does not give us any information. So what is the basis of the legislation?" Hsu asked.

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Asked if the NPP would propose its own amendments or is against amending the act, Hsu did not give a direct answer, but said that the party would not officially declare its stance until it has negotiated with the ministry, adding that the party has been calling for talks for more than two weeks.

Hsu, during a radio interview on Wednesday last week, said the NPP opposed the proposal to lower the minimum rest time between shifts from 11 hours to eight, as well as raising the maximum number of consecutive working days from six to 12.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2017/11/15](#)