

All caucuses to discuss naming issues

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Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) legislators push through a police line at the entrance to the legislative chamber in Taipei yesterday afternoon.

Photo: Peter Lo, Taipei Times

All legislative caucuses have said that they are open to discussing naming issues concerning the national carrier China Airlines (CAL) and the nation's passport cover at cross-caucus negotiations today to set the agenda for the next provisional legislative session.

The Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) caucus had asked for an extraordinary legislative session be held from today to July 22 to deliberate on the China Airlines and passport cover name-change drafts; the nominees for the National Communications Commission, the Control Yuan and Examination Yuan; drafts of an "irrigation and water conservancy associations act" and "act of citizen participation in criminal trial procedures"; and the budget for the second phase of the Forward-looking Infrastructure Development Program.

The DPP's draft proposal regarding China Airlines says that the Ministry of Transportation and Communications must prioritize Taiwan's national interests by enhancing the airline's Taiwanese identity so that it is recognized globally, and that it must invite government agencies to decide on new Chinese and English names.

Taiwan Statebuilding Party (TSP) Legislator Chen Po-wei (陳博偉), and DPP legislators Wang Ting-yu (王廷瑜), Lin Chun-hsien (林俊憲) and Lin I-chin (林益世) said that the passport cover needs to be changed, as it is often confused with China's passport.

Their proposal says that the government should immediately issue new passports, with the cover and personal information page simply reading "Taiwan" in English and Chinese.

Taiwanese nationals could choose between the new and old versions, the proposal says.

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“When our citizens travel abroad ... they are often confused with people from China and are treated badly, because our passport has ‘Republic of China’ on the cover,” it says.

The use of “Taiwan” would uphold the personal dignity of Taiwanese and ensure that they can travel safely, the proposal says.

Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) caucus whip Lin Wei-chou (林錫山) said that the law does not need to be amended for the name changes to be made, as government ministries could deal with them, so it is unnecessary for the DPP to introduce its proposals to the legislature.

However, the KMT caucus has a open mind and is willing to discuss the issues, Lin added.

Taiwan People’s Party caucus whip Lai Hsiang-ling (賴香菱) said that her caucus supports changing China Airlines’ name, but would require negotiations between all parties on how to go about it and what new name to use.

New Power Party (NPP) caucus whip Chiu Hsien-chih (邱顯智) said his caucus’ position is clear: Short, medium and long-term plans are needed to strengthen Taiwan’s identity.

He said he hoped that the issues could be discussed during the provisional session and concrete progress could be made, as he does not want to see the legislature still discussing them in 10 years’ time.

The NPP’s proposal says that China Airlines’ name must be changed, as it has always been confused with China’s national carrier, and it would be in the best interest of all of Taiwan’s 23 million citizens.

Meanwhile, more than 20 KMT lawmakers late yesterday afternoon broke unannounced through the main door of the legislative chamber and took over the podium.

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They were demanding that President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) withdraw her nomination of former Presidential Office secretary-general Chen Chu (陳 Chu) as Control Yuan president.

Outside the Legislative Yuan, a crowd of KMT supporters also gathered to lend their support.

Legislative Speaker You Si-kun called for calm and rational discussion, while Legislative Yuan Secretary-General Lin Chih-chia (林錫山) said that law enforcement officers would not be called to remove the lawmakers, who still occupied the chamber as of press time last night.

Additional reporting by Hsieh Chun-lin and Lin Liang-sheng

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