

Judicial reform groups march in 20th day of protests

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Lawyer Chang Ching, second left, Judicial Reform Foundation chairman Lin Yung-sung, second right, Taiwan Jury Association founder Jerry Cheng, right, and other members of judicial reform groups protest outside the Legislative Yuan in Taipei yesterday.

Photo: CNA

A group of judicial advocates yesterday marched in Taipei as they entered their 20th day of protests to urge Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) lawmakers to include a jury system in a judicial reform bill.

“We are very disappointed to find [the jury system] has been excluded, as the majority of people support jury trials in criminal cases,” said Judicial Reform Foundation chairman Lin Yung-sung (林雲嵩), who was joined in the march by representatives from the Taiwan People’s Party, Taiwan Solidarity Union, Free Taiwan Party, Taiwan Renewal Party and Taiwan Independence Party.

Taiwan Jury Association founder Jerry Cheng (鄭朝暉) presented at the march a statement from US-based Formosan Association for Public Affairs’ Los Angeles chapter, which said that “a jury system provides a more fair trial and prosecution process... We wish to see Taiwan test both jury and lay judge systems, then it can make a final decision based on people’s satisfaction.”

A statement from US-based Formosan Association for Human Rights read: “The jury system is both a duty and a right for US citizens. Taiwanese are in discontent with the justice system here, because of the woes and misdeeds they have encountered with the judges in Taiwan. Speaking from our own experience, we want to encourage Taiwanese to have the courage to adopt the jury system, which has been in effect for more than 300 years.”

Another statement came from the Taiwanese-Canadian Association, which urged Taiwan to undertake real judicial reform. adding: “Taiwan’s government should implement the jury system, for which justice can be best served, and which is most suited to protect the rights and values of a democratic society.”

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Former Taiwan Jury Association chairman Chang Ching (張清堂), who is also a former judge, said: “Taiwan’s justice system is rotten to the core,” adding that he knew of many judges who took bribes and had been convicted for corruption.

Chang said that Taiwan’s justice system is still under the control of conservative forces and politically affiliated judiciary officials who have not changed their old mindset, despite Taiwan undergoing a democratic transition and the progress of the past two decades.

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