

Referendum with elections is best: speaker

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Legislative Speaker You Si-kun speaks at an event in Taipei on Thursday.

Photo: Liao Chen-huei, Taipei Times

Legislative Speaker You Si-kun touted the benefits of holding a referendum in 2022 along with the nine-in-one elections to deal with constitutional issues such as lowering the legal voting age and abolishing the Control Yuan and the Examination Yuan.

Even though an amendment to the Referendum Act (公投法) last year decoupled referendums from national elections and stipulated that they be held every two years on the fourth Saturday of August starting next year, You said in an interview published on Wednesday by the Chinese-language *Mirror Media* magazine that separating constitutional referendums from national elections might not be a good idea.

For a constitutional amendment to pass, it requires more than 9 million votes in a referendum — approximately 1 million more votes than the number of votes President Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) received in the Jan. 11 presidential election, You said.

Therefore, it would be “very difficult” for a referendum to pass if it were held independently from national elections, he said.

If the referendums on the proposed constitutional amendments fail, there is no telling how much longer people would have to wait before the issues are put to a referendum again, he added.

You said that he met separately with the three opposition caucuses in April, and all of them agreed that the referendum for the proposed constitutional amendments should be held in

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tandem with the national elections.

As soon as the next legislative session begins, he would order that a constitutional reform committee be formed, which would consist of 39 members from all four caucuses, in proportion with the number of lawmakers they have, he said.

Five members would be elected to chair committee meetings, he said.

The Additional Articles of the Constitution states that a referendum to amend the Constitution must be announced at least six months before a ballot is held, so the Legislative Yuan should ideally pass the motion to hold the referendum by February 2022, he said.

Regarding calls for the Legislative Yuan to be relocated or revamped, You said that there have been six motions on the issue since the previous batch of lawmakers were elected in 2016, including one by independent lawmaker Freddy Lim (林錫山) to demolish the Chiang Kai-shek Memorial Hall and build a new legislature on the site.

You said he dare not say the task will be completed during his term, but he would be “very satisfied” just to see lawmakers decide on a new location.

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