

Visions for Taiwan: Electoral System Reform

Fairness in electoral system and equal values of vote

Democracy is a combination of the public opinion reviews, party politics, and responsibility politics. The feature of this kind of political regime is that its validity is based on the consent of the general public and therefore government can legally exercise governing power. The enforcement of Taiwan's democracy is still only in a short period. Due to the transitional justice has yet been fully realized, there exists a variety of strange phenomena that are evils remained from Chinese Nationalist Party's authoritarianism in Taiwan's democracy.

In Taiwan Brain Trust's point of view, the goal of "fairness in electoral system and vote of equal values" must be achieved no matter how electoral system is designed. However, the design of electoral system mainly focuses on who can vote and how to vote. The former category includes the eligible age for voting and voting by prisoners whose civil rights are partially suspended; while the latter contains the locations of the polling stations, ways of casting the ballot, and the design of ballot. As far as the electoral system is concerned, its core values should strive to implement popular sovereignty, carry out democracy, safeguard the universal suffrage, promote fair competitions and fair election, and reinforce the party's responsibility.

A sound electoral system is the foundation for democracy. It requires not only nominal fairness but also substantial fairness. The so-called fair competition in elections indicates a fair competition between parties, yet before the transitional justice to be realized, the current design of the various elections favors incumbents and therefore discourages new entrants to come into the game. Hence, there exist not few problems

in Taiwan's electoral system including the unequal value of each vote, the electoral authorities manipulated by a single party, the numerous flaws in the current regulations on elections, poorly regulated campaign donations, rampant vote-buying, unsound legal recourse and litigation system and the lack of response capabilities to handle emergencies, etc. Accordingly, as above mentioned, Taiwan's electoral system has many flaws and a thorough reform is urgently needed.

Therefore, in our propositions, the reformative directions of electoral system are as follow:

Redesign electoral districts; reform seats distributed among political parties in proportion to ballots received; lower the threshold of eligible voting age; forbid those who have dual nationalities to pursue candidacy; revise regulations concerning the relation between campaign activities and mass media; reform regulations on campaign donation including increase the national subsidy, make campaign expense transparent, supervise the use of campaign donations and review the design of political donations; enforce political neutrality; strengthen the effort on combatting vote-buying practices; implement imputative mechanism after elections are ended; reinforce joint responsibilities of political parties; remedy provided for emergent incidents occurred during electoral period. The core thinking that these measures of the reform on electoral system were originated is to reduce to the largest extent any possible interference against the manifestation of direct public opinion.

The electoral system of a nation is an indicator that determine whether this country can truly develop the spirit and features of democracy, whether the people of it can have free discretion to manifest their opinion unmistakably through

elections, and whether the this nation can update the latest needs of people by consecutively regular elections in order to achieve the basic requirement of responsibility politics and public-opinion reviews. Although Taiwan's electoral system reform has been backfired by political reality, the Fairness in electoral system and equal values of vote are undoubtedly the cornerstones of Taiwan's democracy! **BT**