

From the desk of

David Lai

23rd July, 2004

RE: Input on the Political Development Committee (3rd report)

Dear Concerned Group on Hong Kong's Political Development,

I was invited to attend one of the 3 sessions to discuss about the Political Development of Hong Kong with special reference to the 2007 election of the Chief Executive and the 2008 election of Legco. Although I am unable to attend any of the scheduled meetings in July, I am making my input official in writing and will make myself available for follow-up meetings for further input.

As Chairman of the Independent Owners' Association for Fair Treatment, a community-based organization representing property owners' right, a previously named delegate to vote for the people in California, and as a life-long activist in government, I have the following input.

First, the issue of universal suffrage is not a question on whether, but is a question of when and how it is to be implemented. This would apply to BOTH the 2007 election of the Chief Executive and the 2008 election of Legco.

With the existing system of selection of the Chief Executive, there is an 800 member committee which is often referred to as a "small circle selection" and is rejected by most people in Hong Kong; at least by the half-a-million marchers on July 1, 2003 and July 1, 2004. The question to ask is how an acceptable compromise to be reached so that is acceptable by the central government and by most people in Hong Kong.

Without changing the current system completely, I may suggest a modification of the system to somewhat the US system of electoral system which takes care of the geographic constituencies as well as the popular vote. Adding 800 to 1600 members to the Election Committee to represent the popular vote would not eliminate the 1997 and 2002 electoral system but simply make 50 to 70 percent of the member abided to ratio of who and how the popular vote voted. For example, if 5% of the one-vote-per person voted for Mr. Leung, 5% of the Election Committee member will be abided to vote for Mr. Leung; the named delegate or Election Committee member would simply be a named person voting on behalf of the popular vote. This system would allow the named persons to retain the prestige as a member of the Election Committee and would be voting 100% according to the breakdown of the people's choice.

As long as this democratically voting Election Committee is incorporated into the voting system, the democratic demand is satisfied and that it no longer matters who is the named Election Committee Member anymore. A further modified system would be having some of the Election Committee Members be selected by the functional constituencies and would incorporate the input of the functional constituencies.

Second, universal suffrage should happen as soon as possible. Hong Kong is an advanced society and the citizens should have a voice in selecting their Chief Executive. In the past 20 years, the election of Legco has become more democratic as a reflection of the society. Before 1997, with the resignation of the Democrats from Legco, most of Hong Kong's Legco members were selected undemocratically and is resented by most citizens of Hong Kong and by the international communities. With this comment, I think the mixture of the Legco seat should be directly elected by the people of Hong Kong, say 60%, 25 to 30% by functional constituencies, and 10% by District Council, and 5% by the Election Committee which should include all the miscellaneous non-democratic groups.

Thirdly, all Citizens of Hong Kong should be eligible to be elected Legco Member whether they hold residency of another country. All that is needed is their public vow in putting Hong Kong's interest first and let the public decide whether the candidate is good for Hong Kong or not. The current rules of not allowing Citizens with residency of another country in direct election but allowing them for functional constituencies has the logic wrong because it doesn't give the "public test" which is an opportunity to let the public decide which itself is a democratic process. Reporting of residency, is, of course, a requirement and must become public record.

Fourthly, the seat for functional constituencies should expand in its selection process, allowing more associations and public bodies to be included in the selection process. Our association, the Independent Owners' Association for Fair Treatment, requested and hereby request again to be included in the Real Estate functional constituency as small and medium property owners constitute the majority of the total real estate holdings in Hong Kong and it is ironic that different owners' association, representing the overall interest of the property owners is currently NOT included in the real estate functional constituency.

I request the government bodies keep us informed and allow our further participation in the development of the election system.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
(Signed)

David Lai

Chair, Independent Owners' Association for Fair Treatment
Member, Wan Chai District Council's Economic and Employment Committee