

Secretary for Justice on constitutional reform

Following is the transcript of remarks made by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Rimsky Yuen, SC, after attending a radio programme today (April 23):

Reporter: Can you elaborate a bit about what you said in the programme, that you think the pan-democrats do not have an objective reason for opposing the reform package?

Secretary for Justice: As I was saying in the radio programme just now, we have put forward all the explanations as to each and every bit of the proposal that we put forward. So far, what we have heard from the pan-democrats is that they would object to any proposal which is made on the basis of the decision made by the NPCSC on August 31 last year. Basically, what they are saying is, if you are doing it in accordance with the law, in accordance with the decision made by the NPCSC last August, we are going to object to that. That is, if I may say, it's no more than a political slogan. We have not heard any detailed analysis as to the reasons behind. And in fact, more importantly, one thing which they have yet to explain to the community of Hong Kong is that, if they were to reject this proposal put forward by the Government, first of all, what are the chances of getting yet another proposal which they think is acceptable and which they think also will be found acceptable by the other sectors of the community in Hong Kong, and also the Central People's Government. So in other words, what they have not explained to the people of Hong Kong is if they reject the proposal now, when are we going to have universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive? How they are going to achieve that and why do they think they can do that? It's not they who are the only sector in the Hong Kong community that we need to take into account.

Reporter: But there are not much changes to the nominating procedure from the existing proceedings and the proposed proceedings. Essentially the nomination threshold is even

higher than what it was for the candidate to become an unofficial candidate. The entry threshold is of course lower but the nominating process is not much different.

Secretary for Justice: I am not too sure I can agree with that. A few points we need to take into account. First of all, our proposal would have to be on the basis of the Decision made by the NPCSC last August. That is something which is more than crystal clear. Secondly, when we want to consider how we should do with the composition of the nominating committee, one needs to consider not just the legal consideration. We also have to take into account the political consideration, if not political reality. As a matter of fact, the political reality is I don't think there can be any consensus which can be reached in relation to the composition of the nominating committee. I gave the example in the programme just now, that people have been suggesting perhaps we can pick up one of those sub-sectors and cut down the number of seats. But the question is would they agree? And we were to do that, would they in fact end up that the whole package would be vetoed by the relevant Legislative Council members which leads to the result that we can't even step forward in the progress of universal suffrage? So we need to take into account the overall picture and whether or not if we were to adjust one aspect and the result would be wholly adverse leading to the veto of the whole package. Therefore, we need to take into account not just one factor; we need to look at the overall picture.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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