

## *“President-Legislator Two-in-One Election” Should not Be Enforced Until the Next Election*

| TBT Forum

For the issues of “absentee voting” and “president-legislator two-in-one election” brought up by President Ma, Taiwan Brain Trust (TBT) conducted and published the latest poll on April 7 indicating that as high as 51.2 % of the public voted against the “absentee voting.” For the “two-in-one election,” while there are 57.3 % of the public voted for this policy, still as high as 49.9 % of the public thought that it should not be enforced until the next election. The outcome of the poll is so valuable that the Central Election Commission may take it into consideration.

The poll also shows that, though these topics have been through severe political battles between ruling and opposition party for several times, the general public still lacks of understanding of the actual meaning of them. It provides that there are as high as 47.9 % and 57.3 % respectively of the public stated that they didn’t acquire any information concerning the promulgation of these policies by the Government. As to the approval rate of the “two-in-one election.” there are 57.3 % of the public voted for, while 25.2 % are against. In the aspect of “absentee voting.” the opposing rate is as high as 51.2 %; whereas only 40.1 % of the public approve. Simultaneously, the poll indicates that, as to the contributory effect to the election of two parties, the margin of difference is drastic. There are 26.7 % and 33.4 % respectively of the public are of the opinion that the policies of “two-in-one election” and “absentee voting” can be beneficial to the election of the Kuomintang (KMT); on the other hand, only 4.5 % and 6 % of the public think that the policies can contribute to the election of the Democratic Progressive Party

(DPP). With regard to the latest controversial issue of nuclear energy, the poll provides that 50.3 % of public wish to incorporate the referendum concerning the issue into the election with 36% of public against.

The President of the TBT, Lo Chih-cheng, stated that, the polls consecutively promoted by Ministry of Interior Affairs and the KMT revealed that the majority of public agrees to the combined election; yet, according to the poll conducted by TBT, it is apparent that although the general public votes for the “two-in-one election,” there are over half of general public consider that it should be enforced in the next election instead of this year’s. He also concerns about that the promulgation of this policy is due to the incumbent president Ma’s desperation for the reelection; hence it is not hard to associate what Ma proposes to do is to customize the coming election for himself.

In the statement of Lo, the current KMT tends to promote the combination of president and legislator election without modifying the *lex lata*; however, the relative rules governing the presidential election and legislator election are not alike; for examples, according to Civil Servants Election And Recall Act, “a person, in order to have the right of suffrage, must be living in an electoral district for not less than 4 consecutive month;” whereas in the Presidential and Vice Presidential Election and Recall Act, “a person who having the right of suffrage is required living in the ROC for not less than 6 consecutive months.” Consequently, it is possible that some people will only receive one ballot. Further, both enactments governing the election have different

penalties with regard to the act of violation of the elector; therefore, without modifying relevant rules before the enforcement of the “two-in-one election,” it is obvious that controversy about electoral service will occur one after another and sabotage Taiwan’s well-treasured democracy.

As to the contention showing that the combination of election can reduce the cost of election, Huang Wei-feng, Associate Research Fellow of Academia Sinica, is of the opinion that the election system is the foundation of democracy and appropriate frequency of election can contribute to the maturity of the electoral process and supervise the ruling authority. In the past, Taiwan society put more emphasis on reducing the election to decrease the cost; however, if the most significant concern is to minimize the cost, then the best solution will be to abandon the system of election. Instead, the most important quality of the election is to supervise the ruling authority and secure it from being corrupted.

Gao Jyh-Peng, DPP Legislator, stated, President Ma had tried to give impetus to “absentee voting,” but now Ma tends to promulgate “two-in-one election.” This switch of policy is because after Ma became ruling authority, KMT has suffered from defeat in several elections in southern part of Taiwan, the mobilization of KMT in election thus become less-energetic, therefore, Ma’s intention is to secure his basic supporter through combining the president and legislator election.

TBT’s President Lo also provides his concern that Ma’s smug calculation behind the promulgation of “two-in-one election” is to let the “chicken shoulders the hen.” But in the view

of KMT’s legislator in southern electoral district, they worry about “the chicken will be choked by the hen.” Rather, if the presidential election and legislator election were separated, the KMT incumbent legislators and electors would lose the election, let alone aid and assist for the election of President Ma. Therefore, the inclination to the combination of election among KMT is that the legislators from northern part of Taiwan approve; while the legislators from south reserve the opinion for further observation.

Gao Jyh-Peng, the DPP Legislator, who always advocates to hold a referendum to solve the issue of nuclear energy, stated that, shown from the polls, the objection of the proposal to attach the referendum to election long-supported by the KMT is not only a huge mistake but also is not compatible with the global trend. Therefore, he suggested, the referendum concerning the issue of nuclear energy should be incorporated into the coming presidential election.

The poll was conducted by TBT entrusting to the Decision Making Research, Co. Ltd. which processed sampling survey with the general public who is above the age of 20 in selected surveying area during March 30 to 31, 2011. The quantity of valid samples is 1,070. With 95% confidence, the sampling error is limited to p-p 3%.

*Note: Following TBT’s polls published on April 7, the Central Election Commission has decided with resolution to combine the upcoming legislative and presidential elections in January next year on April 19.* **TBT**