

Legislative elections (Taiwan): DPP Announces Wave of Nominations, With an Emphasis on Former Sunflower Movement Activists

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THE DPP ANNOUNCED a slate of legislative candidates earlier this week, particularly with an aim on highlighting the young candidates it was fielding. This includes former Sunflower Movement [student leader Lin Fei-fan, who later served as deputy secretary-general of the DPP as part of the Su Tseng-chang cabinet, as well as Taipei city councilor Wu Pei-yi](#), another former Sunflower Movement activist.

In particular, [controversy broke out earlier last month after reports indicated that the DPP planned to field Ili Cheng rather than Wu in Zhongzheng-Wanhua](#), where Wu is currently city councilor. This proved a controversial pick, seeing as Wu has held office for two terms and is considered to have a strong local presence.

By contrast, Cheng was an untested political candidate, as an entertainer that is often the object of celebrity gossip about her sex life. Cheng being run in place of Wu—who is generally regarded as close to Tsai Ing-wen—was widely interpreted as an attempt by party chair William Lai to swap out political candidates close to Tsai with his own people. Lai will be serving as the next presidential candidate of the DPP, but he has had tensions with Tsai after challenging her for the DPP's 2020 presidential nomination. It can be expected that Tsai will continue to remain a powerful factional leader in the DPP after her presidency ends.



FACEBOOK POST BY LIN FEI-FAN ANNOUNCING HIS RUN

Nevertheless, following the controversy, the DPP has clearly backed down from attempting to swap out Wu for Cheng. Indeed, the optics would be rather poor, in swapping out someone regarded as a serious politician for an unserious one. Cheng has not been announced as running in any other district, though it is possible the DPP still intends to field her somewhere else.

Yet the composition of the candidates that the DPP intends to run in Taipei and New Taipei heavily slants toward former Sunflower Movement activists. Apart from Lin Fei-fan and Wu Pei-yi, [Wu Cheng and Tseng Po-yu will be running in Zhonghe and Xindian respectively](#). Both are former Sunflower activists and NPP members that later became independent politicians after the wave of departures from the party ahead of the 2020 elections, though Tseng also served for a stint in the

Green Party and as part of disinformation research think tank Doublethink Labs.

Clearly, the DPP aims to compete with the KMT by running young candidates in Taipei and New Taipei, as the regions of the country that will likely receive the most attention in the upcoming election cycle. However, one notes that this repeats the pattern of running younger candidates in areas where they will see challenges, in that the electoral districts in Taipei and New Taipei they are running in historically slant toward the pan-Blue camp.



FACEBOOK POST BY WU CHENG ANNOUNCING HIS NOMINATION

Running Lin Fei-fan in Zhongshan and North Songshan, rather than the safer choice of his native Tainan, is a deliberate choice. Lin is generally seen as the leader of the Sunflower Movement and so his run frames the other races.

As Lin Fei-fan is running in Zhongshan-North Songshan, he will be running in the electoral district that Enoch Wu previously contested Chiang Wan-an, though [Wu's poor performance last time in the by-election for the seat that Chiang vacated](#) when he became Taipei mayor foreclosed future runs. The DPP may believe that Wu's past successes can assist Lin, or Lin's run may be primarily with the aim of setting the tone for the other races.

There has been some backlash within the DPP against incorporating Wu Cheng and Tseng Po-yu into the party when historically both were independent, rather than party members, in that the DPP chose to pass over party members to independents instead. Yet this has long been a dynamic of Taiwanese politics, when independents or prominent figures from society are recruited into the DPP over long-time party members.

By contrast, Wang Min-sheng, who will be running in Wenshan, is slightly older at age 47. As having held office as a city councilor in Wenshan, it is likely his turn to run for office.



FACEBOOK POST BY TSENG PO-YU ANNOUNCING HER NOMINATION

The choice to [run 38-year-old Lee Cheng-hao in Yonghe has proven more controversial, seeing as Lee is a former KMT and PFP member](#), having served as a spokesman for Eric Chu in 2016. However, Lee was expelled from the party after criticizing the KMT's 2020 presidential candidate, Han Kuo-yu, on a television program.

Lee also has allegations of harassing an ex against him. This may not reflect well on the party, seeing as a former party worker accused [the DPP's Women's Department of covering up a case of](#)

[sexual harassment against her on a post that went viral on Facebook last night](#), citing how the issue of sexual harassment in political parties was focused on in TV hit *Wave Makers*. The DPP has since apologized for the incident, but the issue could still come back to haunt the DPP.

It is to be seen who else the DPP announces as its candidates. Nevertheless, if the DPP intends to field so many former Sunflower Movement activists under Lai's leadership, this probably will strengthen the position of individuals close to Tsai Ing-wen in the DPP going forward, if they win office.

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P.S.

- NEW BLOOM. 06/01/2023:
<https://newbloommag.net/2023/06/01/dpp-sunflower-nomination/>