

# Taiwan: What Do the Three Bills Pushed Through Legislature by the KMT Last Week Mean for Taiwan?

Sunday 12 January 2025, by [HIOE Brian](#) (Date first published: 23 December 2024).

**THREE CONTROVERSIAL BILLS were forced through the legislature by the KMT last week, with all three bills completing their third reading in the legislature.**

The means by which the KMT did so led to significant public outrage, seeing as the KMT physically prevented DPP legislators from being present on the floor of the legislature by removing them, and then voting without their presence. This would be a means of passing legislation without any consultation of opposing views, through strong-arm tactics. As such, [more than 15,000 rallied](#) outside of the legislature on the night that the KMT pushed through the laws as part of the Bluebird Movement.

Nevertheless, what the bills actually passed by the KMT may still be murky to many members of the public. It is, in fact, what may be the least important bill that has received the most public attention.

Specifically, the KMT's changes to the Recall Act have received the most attention, with the KMT seen as taking away the people's constitutional right to recall politicians. This would be through requiring more people to vote for a recall than participating in an election, which would be difficult to achieve in all but the most exceptional circumstances.

Yet barriers to recalls were already high in Taiwan. The changes to the Recall Act may have been what most angered the public and drove forward mobilization for the Bluebird Movement. But with the passage of changes to the Recall Act, this might actually have an ultimately beneficial effect on protest mobilizations in Taiwan by pushing energy that went toward difficult and unlikely recall campaigns toward other ends.

More dangerous is that changes to the laws governing the Constitutional Court, which [require a minimum number of justices](#) in order for the Constitutional Court to make majority rulings, were also passed.

It is anticipated that the KMT will next seek to block any appointments proposed by the Lai administration. As the Constitutional Court only has eight justices, with seven having retired after the end of their terms in October, this would prevent the Constitutional Court from making rulings that could seek to block legislation advanced by the KMT on grounds of unconstitutionality.

The third law, which has received less attention, is [regarding budgeting](#) between the central and local governments. The KMT claims that currently the central government receives 75% of funding, while local governments only receive 25%, and the new laws will amend this to a 60/40 split between the central and local governments.

The DPP has countered that local governments already receive subsidies from local governments,

suggesting that they already received around 40% of government funding. But as many local governments are KMT-controlled, the KMT is clearly seeking to limit the power of the central government while expanding the power of local governments through this move. In this way, the KMT is likely hoping to strengthen the local clientelist and patronage networks it has historically depended on to win votes. This proves similar to [a wide-ranging infrastructure bill](#) for Taiwan's east coast previously advanced by the KMT, which would be used to allocate funding to the political networks of KMT caucus leader Fu Kun-chi. Likewise, the KMT tried on multiple occasions to [block the national budget](#) for next year, as part of its continuing scorched earth tactics against the DPP.

Even so, the DPP has mostly framed the move as intended to siphon money away from defense. The DPP has generally framed the KMT's recent actions as acting as China's proxy in Taiwan, leaning into the cross-strait narrative in order to leverage anger against the KMT.

Still, what may contribute most to public outrage is to what extent the KMT has been clear about its intention to freeze the normal operations of government to circumvent the DPP, such as by announcing its intention to pass bills while blocking the DPP from physically attending meetings or that it intends to block any new appointments to the Constitutional Court. The KMT seems to be acting on the belief that it has the absolute popular mandate for its actions. However, as this wide slate of actions has been carried out despite the KMT only having a narrow majority in the legislature in conjunction with its political ally, the TPP, it is possible that the KMT's actions will lead to blowback against it.

---

**Brian Hioe**

[Click here](#) to subscribe to ESSF newsletters in English and or French.

---

**P.S.**

New Bloom Mag

<https://newbloommag.net/2024/12/23/kmt-three-bills/>