

Bauhinia Poll on 2012 Political Reform

(9 February 2009) The Bauhinia Foundation Research Centre (BFRC) today released the findings of an opinion poll on Hong Kong's political reform in 2012, the objective of which is to find out more about the level of public understanding and different views of the relevant issues raised in the Government's recent consultation document entitled "Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and for Forming the Legislative Council in 2012".

The BFRC Chairman, Mr Anthony Wu Ting-yuk, said, "The electoral arrangements in 2012 will pave the way for universal suffrage for the Chief Executive in 2017 and for the LegCo in 2020. It is of utmost importance that we make progress at this critical juncture to ensure a smooth transition to universal suffrage.

"The consultation document is a very comprehensive one involving some very complex and technical issues. We hope the poll can provide an objective basis to facilitate more rational and informed discussion by the public on this important subject."

He called on members of the public to put forth their views on the 2012 electoral arrangements before the end of the public consultation period on February 19.

The poll has been designed with reference to the key issues as set out in the Government's public consultation document. Its major findings are summarized as follows:

Decision by NPCSC

- 72.6% of the respondents said they were aware of the decision by the National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC) regarding the universal suffrage timetable (i.e., 2017 for the Chief Executive and 2020 for the LegCo); only 27.4% was not aware of the NPCSC decision.
- Close to 60% (58.8%) of the respondents said they accepted the relevant NPCSC decision; less than 30% (29.4%) said they did not.

Observation: Most people are aware of the NPCSC decision concerning the universal suffrage timetable, and more than half of the respondents accept the relevant decision.

Composition of the Election Committee

- 65.5% of the respondents agreed that the number of seats of the Election Committee (EC) should be increased to 1,200; 24.5% disagreed. Amongst those who agreed with an increase in the number of the EC seats, 63.7% agreed that the new EC seats should be evenly allocated to the existing four constituencies, namely industrial, commercial and financial sectors, the professions, labour, social services, religious and other sectors as well as the political sector; only 26.7% disagreed.
- 68.1% of the respondents agreed that more District Council members should be elected to the EC; only 25.1% disagreed. 68.9% agreed that increasing the number of elected District Council members in the EC will help enhance its representativeness; 20.7% disagreed.

- 57.6% did not agree that replacing “corporate votes” with “director’s/executive’s/association’s/individual votes” would enhance the representativeness of the EC; only 29.3% agreed.

Observation: A majority of the respondents agree with the proposal to increase the number of the EC seats to 1,200. There is also a view amongst the majority of people that getting more elected District Council members in the EC will help broaden its representative base. But the idea of replacing “corporate votes” with “director’s/executive’s/association’s/individual votes” in the EC election does not seem to find favour with the respondents.

Nomination of the Chief Executive (CE) in 2012

- 56.7% of the respondents agreed that the nomination threshold for the office of the CE should be maintained at the existing level, i.e. 1/8 of the total membership of the EC; 32.8% disagreed. 54.7% of the respondents indicated support for maintaining the requirement that the CE should not have any political affiliation; 35.6% said the requirement should be removed.

Forming of LegCo in 2012 & Electoral Base of Functional Constituencies (FCs)

- Given that the LegCo seats will be divided equally by those returned by geographical constituencies and functional constituencies, 54.2% of the respondents agreed that the number of LegCo seats in 2012 should be increased from 60 to 70; only 29.2% disagreed. 64.9% of the respondents agreed that the increased LegCo seats would help broaden the base of political participation; only 27% disagreed.
- 57.7% of the respondents agreed with the idea of allocating the new FC seats to District Council members. Of them, 66.7% agreed that the new FC seats should be returned through election by elected District Council members from amongst themselves; only 25.6% took the view that both elected and appointed District Council members should be allowed to take part in the election of the new FC seats.
- 62.3% of the respondents did not agree that replacing “corporate votes” with “director’s/executive’s/association’s/individual votes” in the FCs would help enhance the FCs’ electorate base; only 24.4% agreed.

Observation: A slight majority support the idea that an increase in the number of LegCo seats will help broaden the base of political participation. There is wide support for the idea of allowing elected District Council members only to take part in the election of the new FC seats. But many take the view that replacing “corporate votes” with “director’s/executive’s/association’s/individual votes” will not help enhance the representativeness of the FCs.

Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong was commissioned by the BFRC to conduct the telephone interview survey from January 29 to February 3, 2010. The target respondents are Hong Kong permanent residents aged 18 and above. A total of 1,004 respondents were successfully interviewed.

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