

Draft aims to preserve respect for national anthem



Students look at exhibits about the history of China's national anthem at an exhibition in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, in April last year.
[Photo/Xinhua]

People who distort or disrespect China's national anthem, such as maliciously changing the lyrics, could face up to 15 days in detention if a new law is approved.

A draft of the country's national anthem law, which was submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Thursday for first reading, also bans the use of the song in advertisements, as background music and at private funerals.

It states that the song should be played during important diplomatic or sporting events, and that people should stand and face the national flag when the song is played, and military officials should salute.

March of the Volunteers was composed in 1935 by Nie Er, with lyrics from poet Tian Han.

"It's a key symbol in the Constitution," said Shen Chunyao, director of the committee's Legislative Affairs Committee, who introduced the draft law. "It's good to regulate its use, as it will increase citizens' awareness of patriotism and uphold national dignity."

The draft is being discussed at the bimonthly session of the Standing

Committee of the National People's Congress, which lasts until Tuesday. It follows similar laws on China's national flag and national emblem.

Zhang Wenxian, deputy director of the China Law Society, applauded the draft, saying it is necessary to regulate how to play the song "because some people sang or recomposed it, I think, in an entertainment-oriented fashion".

"I also felt uncomfortable when I saw some people running back and forth while the song was being broadcast. They were not serious enough about it," he said.

In addition to regulating the use of the national anthem, he added that popularizing it is also important. The draft says the official version of the song should be on the website of the State Council, and that it should be taught in primary school.