

# National anthem law calls for respect

People will have to think twice before setting China's national anthem as a ring tone, since the behavior could violate a law being drafted that standardizes the song's uses.

The proposed law will be submitted for an initial reading in June.

Due to the lack of legal restraints, there are some occasions when the national anthem is not solemnly played.

In recent years during the annual two sessions, some deputies to the National People's Congress (NPC) and members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) have made proposals and suggestions about drafting a law regarding the national anthem.

Yu Hai, a CPPCC National Committee member and former head of the military band of the Chinese People's Liberation Army, has for 10 consecutive years submitted a proposal to draft a national anthem law.

"The national anthem is the symbol of our country's voice, which should be protected by law," Yu said.

The national anthem should not be abused by being played as entertainment or at business events such as weddings, funerals, dance parties and vulgar celebrations. And on major occasions, the attendees who keep playing or are not properly dressed when the national anthem is played will be held liable.

Setting the national anthem as a ring tone and tampering with the lyrics of the song will be punishable. The law also covers playing the song not reverently.

Some Chinese internet users worry about whether they will break the law if they cannot sing the song well since they are tone-deaf.

This is a misunderstanding, Yu said.

"The national anthem legislation urges that the song should be played solemnly on formal occasions to show respect to the Chinese nation. Besides, only the approved national anthem can be played in public since there are many versions of it. And on important occasions, attendees shall pay respect to the song. So whether one can sing the song well or not doesn't result in breaking the law," Yu said.

China is not the first country to draft laws about national anthem. Some foreign countries and regions including Russia, Canada and Malaysia, have made specific laws about their national anthems, while some other countries and regions, including Japan, Singapore, Myanmar and the Philippines, have made laws regarding their national flags, national emblems and national anthems.

The national anthem is March of the Volunteers, with lyrics by poet Tian Han (1898-1968) and music composed by Nie Er (1912-1935).

Authorities issued a regulation on proper etiquette for the national anthem in 2014, banning the song from being performed at weddings, funerals and entertainments, such as balls or other non-political functions.

Respectively in 1990 and 1991, China adopted laws covering etiquette regarding its national flag and national emblem.