

Transcript of remarks by CE at media session before ExCo (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Executive, Mr John Lee, at a media session before the Executive Council meeting today (October 31):

Reporter: Chief Executive, no opposition groups bagged nominations for the District Council Election while some small parties led by pro-establishment figures like Michael Tien could not file candidates to the election as well. So do you think the revamped system also prevents patriots out of the system, and can the District Councils be diversified as you said in terms of political spectrum? The second question is a Chinese University scholar whose academic work includes June 4 movement has been denied visa and got fired. What do you think could be the possible reasons, and does that counter Hong Kong's plan to snatch global talents? Thank you.

Chief Executive: First of all, about the improved District Council election system, we have to ensure all the procedures and the rules governing the election apply equally to everybody. All these rules, principles and procedures are made very open, fair, and we explained all these matters every now and then clearly. If anybody wants to take part in the election, then of course he has to satisfy a few requirements as laid down in this improved election system. They include, first of all, he must be a patriot, he must support the Basic Law and bear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and he has also to obtain sufficient nomination votes. For those who are given this right to give the nomination, they have also to ensure that those who have been seeking the nomination will satisfy the conditions I have just mentioned. Also, in exercising this duty, the person in consideration whether to give the nomination has to convince himself that the person who is seeking his nomination is a competent person, and will be able to discharge his duty as a district councillor effectively and faithfully, and satisfy his basic expectations. That applies to anybody – whatever backgrounds, whether he belongs to any political party or not. I think that is most important, because the system has to be fair and apply to everybody in the same way. I think that is the most important principle for all elections to be considered, because fair and equal application is most important.

A candidate will have to respect the decision of the person whom he seeks the nomination from. That is the basic attitude – whenever we want to convince other people that we are a right person to discharge this public duty, then it is up to him to convince people. It is also the right attitude to recognise that in order to convince the other person, then you have to respect his decision as well, and it is up to you to ensure that you can convince the person you want to convince. I think that is the very basic concept, principle and attitude of any person who wants to seek people's nomination or even eventually their votes.

In regard to the Government's decision to grant a visa application or not, I think the Immigration Department will always act in accordance with prevailing policy and the principles, which include whether the person holds a valid travel document, whether he is going to be a burden to Hong Kong, or whether there is any risk regarding security and crime. All these cases are handled, as usual, in accordance with all these principles. I think all these principles are actually on the website of the Immigration Department, so the Immigration Department will deal with each and every case accordingly.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)