

Standing committee composition at bottleneck

June 2024

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The 22nd NA committee formation process

The National Assembly (NA) held a plenary session on 10 June with only opposition Democratic Party (DP) members in attendance.

During this plenary session, **the DP proceeded with the election of 11 standing committee chairpersons**, including the Legislation and Judiciary Committee and the House Steering Committee. The ruling People Power Party (PPP) boycotted the plenary session, in protest of the opposition party's unilateral decision.

Unlike the DP's commitment to finalize the NA composition by 7 June to comply the legal deadline, the two parties met together once again under the arbitration of recently-appointed NA Speaker Woo Won-shik.

On 17 June, **the PPP's floor leader Choo Kyung-ho and the DP's floor leader Park Chan-dae met and discussed the composition of the NA with the Speaker but were unable to reach an agreement**. While first deputy floor leaders of the two parties will continue the dialogue, the parties also agreed on holding an additional meeting between floor leaders as needed. Despite such an effort, the negotiation for the NA composition is not out of the woods yet and is unlikely to reach a conclusion in the short term.

Chairmanship of the 21st and 22nd NA by parties

[As of 20 June 2024]

Standing Committee	21 st NA				22 nd NA	
	'20-'21	'21-'22	'22-'23	'23-'24	'24-'25	Chairperson
House Steering Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP	DP	Park Chan-dae (3 rd , DP floor leader)
Legislation and Judiciary Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP	DP	Jung Chung-rae (4 th , DP supreme member)
Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP		
Strategy and Finance Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP		
National Defense Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP		
Intelligence Committee	DP	DP	PPP	PPP		
Public Administration and Security Committee	DP	DP	PPP	DP	DP	Shin Jeong-hoon (3 rd , former mayor of Naju-si)
Science, ICT, Broadcasting and Communications Committee	DP	DP	DP	PPP	DP	Choi Min-hee (2 nd , former KCC* vice chair)
Health and Welfare Committee	DP	DP	DP	DP	DP	Park Ju-min (3 rd , former lawyer)
Trade, Industry, Energy, SMEs and Startups Committee	DP	DP	DP	DP		
Gender Equality and Family Committee	DP	DP	DP	DP		
Special Committee on Budgets and Account	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	Park Jeong (3 rd , former academy CEO)
Education Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	Kim Young-ho (3 rd , foreign affairs expert)
Culture, Sports and Tourism Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	Chun Jae-soo (3 rd , former BH* official)
Agriculture, Food, Rural Affairs, Oceans and Fisheries Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	Eoh Kiy-Ku (3 rd , labour expert)
Environment and Labor Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	An Ho-young (3 rd , former lawyer)
Land, Infrastructure and Transport Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP	DP	Maeng Sung-kyu (3 rd , former MOLIT* vice min.)
National Policy Committee	DP	PPP	DP	DP		

* KCC: Korea Communications Commission | BH: Blue House | MOLIT: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport

The key stakeholders' stances on the NA composition



NA Speaker
Woo Won-shik



PPP floor leader
Choo Kyung-ho



DP floor leader
Park Chan-dae

NA Speaker Woo Won-shik stated that, "The opposition party taking all 18 standing committees violates the right of voters who supported the PPP," and that the distribution of standing committees between the DP and the PPP should be 11 and 7, respectively, in line with standard protocol of filling committee chair seats proportionately. To the ruling and opposition parties' leadership, he emphasized, "It is another significant problem that the opening of the NA has been delayed, violating the rights of the people once again." He also urged that "We don't have much time. We should finish organizing the standing committees as soon as possible to show ourselves to be a working National Assembly."

PPP floor leader Choo Kyung-ho first called on the DP floor leader Park Chan-dae to cancel the election of 11 standing committees, including the Legislation and Judiciary Committee, the House Steering Committee, and the Science, ICT, Broadcasting and Communications Committee. However, on 19 June, Choo openly suggested another proposal to alternate the chairpersonship of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee and the House Steering Committee between the two parties every other year – an attempt by Choo to demonstrate that his party is making some effort to resolve the conflict.

In response to the PPP's initial call for "negotiation from the square one", the DP criticized, "It is simply pettiness to stifle not only the standing committees but also the NA." and added "If the NA has to elect the remaining seven standing committees in order to do its job and execute the proper checks and balances, we have no choice but to do so."

On Choo's proposal of the taking turns in chairpersonship, **the DP floor leader Park Chan-dae** stated that "we will consider the proposal only if President Yoon agrees to forego his veto power for a year."

After its chairpersonship election, the DP has been hosting committee meetings and demanding that government officials, including ministers, to attend the meetings.

The DP also held the first internal policy council meeting and selected 22 bills and one resolution as its party line. Many of the selected bills were the ones that were once passed in the NA with the opposition parties' push but subsequently vetoed by President Yoon during the 21st NA.

While the opposition parties, including the DP, are holding standing committees alone, the PPP is conducting on-the-ground actions through the intra-party special committees. The PPP organized 15 special committees focusing on their policy agenda. Their plans are to leverage executive authority via influencing presidential decrees to support government policies without joining standing committees. In fact, the PPP's own special committees are already getting in sync with the government on policy implementation, having vice ministers from each ministry in their committee meetings.

Two major parties' fierce battle for parliamentary control

Electing new leadership: party conventions



Source: Yonhap news

The PPP will be holding its party convention on 23 July to elect a new party leader. In preparing the party convention, the PPP approved a revision to the convention rules to reflect 80% party member electoral votes and 20% public opinion polls for the election results.

Former PPP Emergency Response Committee Chairperson Han Dong-hoon is rushing to prepare for his declaration of candidacy for this role. It is reported that he has already begun working on his candidacy manifesto and searching for an office in the political hotspot district of Yeouido.

Some senior party members with high political influence, namely Na Kyung-won, Yoon Sang-hyun, and Won Hee-ryong, who are said to be potential party leaders, are weighing whether they will enter this race as "the challenger" to Han Dong-hoon for the party leader position.

The DP's national convention is scheduled for 18 August. The DP will launch a convention planning committee and a call for candidate registration soon. The current party leader, Lee Jae-myung, will be running for a second term as party leader, an event unprecedented since 2000. To avoid the criticism of "the player being the referee," Lee is expected to step down from the position before the convention committee commences.



Meanwhile, **the DP voted to amend its party constitution** on 9 June to make an exception to the resignation deadline for party leaders who want to run for the presidency. Currently, if the party leader or a member of the Supreme Council of the DP wants to run for the presidency, he or she must resign at least one year prior to a presidential election (in this case, March 2026). However, the amendment will allow the party's steering committee to set a different deadline for resignation when there are 'special and substantial reasons' for doing so.

The pundits assess this amendment as a means of for the DP to pave the way for Lee Jae-myung to continue his role as the party leader until the party's candidate nomination for the next local election in June 2026, meaning that local governments and even local lawmaker posts will likely be filled with the figures from the DP's pro-Lee faction.

The party also abolished Article 80 of its constitution, which allowed the general secretary to suspend a party official from the office if he or she was accused of corruption-related charges such as bribery or illegal political funding. This revision has been criticized as a "bulletproof" measure to protect Lee from risk of prosecution.

While the National Assembly is in a state of flux in terms of composition, **individual lawmakers are not waiting for things to settle and are already gearing up to introduce bills** for promoting – or regulating – industries. Careful monitoring is needed to prepare for risks and seize opportunities.

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