

GR Korea

# POLITICAL NEWSLETTER

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## Gearing up for the new National Assembly

Political parties are finalizing their preparations to kick off the 22<sup>nd</sup> National Assembly (NA) on 30 May.

The People Power Party (PPP) will begin the new NA with a workshop for the members-elect on 30-31 May. The workshop will discuss and debate the party's legislative and policy agenda for the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA and seek to address ongoing intra-party issues such as the blame game for the General Election defeat. Additionally, the workshop is expected to develop strategies to navigate the political dynamics with the opposition. The DP's reintroduction of the Special Acts<sup>1</sup> previously vetoed by President Yoon Suk-yeol is expected to feature prominently on this front.

The Democratic Party (DP), meanwhile, has already held a workshop for its members-elect from 22-23 May. The workshop reviewed the party's planned legislative agenda and parliamentary strategies. Going further, the DP members-elect agreed to hold plenary sessions and standing committee meetings every week during the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA, aiming to demonstrate their political efficacy and revamp their perception as a "working NA." They also decided to expedite the passage of bills, especially when re-introducing the bills vetoed by President Yoon. They also committed to take the lead in responding to global crises such as political polarization, climate change, demographic decline, and digital transformation.

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1) Special Acts include: the Special Act on the Fact-finding of Itaewon Disaster, the Corporal Chae Special Counsel Act, and the Kim Keon-hee (current First Lady) Special Counsel Act.

Meanwhile, at the Presidential Office, **President Yoon recently vetoed the 'Corporal Chae Special Counsel Act,'** a bill proposing a special counsel to probe alleged government interference in the investigation of a Marine Corporal's death in 2023. This marks Yoon's 10<sup>th</sup> exercise of veto power since assuming office in May 2022.

## President Yoon exercised his 10<sup>th</sup> veto



Source: Yonhap News Agency

In a cabinet meeting, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo explained the motivation for the President's veto, claiming that "this Special Counsel Act was procedurally rushed through by the opposition parties alone. In terms of content, it gives the opposition the exclusive right to recommend candidates for special prosecutor roles, which infringes on the president's rights and violates the constitutional separation of powers." Choo Kyung-ho, the floor leader of the PPP, also stated that if the DP forces a plenary session on 28 May to pass the Act, he will galvanize the PPP to uniformly oppose it being passed.

Shortly after Yoon's veto, DP leader Lee Jae-myung criticized, "President Yoon has refused to fulfill the people's mandate to reveal the truth about the death of an innocent young soldier. His recent promise to listen to the people has been revealed as a short-lived deceit."

Outgoing NA Speaker Kim Jin-pyo expressed his commitment to tie up this issue within the 21<sup>st</sup> NA's term. He said "even if the ruling and opposition parties cannot reach a consensus on the date of the plenary session, it will be held on the 28th to re-vote on the Act." He emphasized, "this Act must be finalized within the 21<sup>st</sup> NA term, in light of the purpose of introducing the fast-track system and the NA's general procedure."

## The 22<sup>nd</sup> NA composition prospects

### Speaker and Deputy Speaker

The election for the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA Speaker and two Deputy Speakers is expected to take place on 5 June. The DP has nominated NA member Woo Won-shik (5<sup>th</sup> term) as its candidate for Speaker and NA member Lee Hak-young (4<sup>th</sup> term) for Deputy Speaker. Woo emphasized that he will "focus solely on the people, listen to their demands, and make decisions based on what is right for them." Given the DP's majority in the NA, the PPP has opted to not field a candidate for Speaker.



◀ From left to right:

Speaker candidate  
Woo Won-shik (DP)  
and Deputy Speaker  
candidate Lee Hak-  
young (DP)

From the PPP, NA member Cho Kyoung-tae (6<sup>th</sup> term) has officially announced his candidacy for Deputy Speaker. However, since the DP's candidate for the same position is only in his fourth term, the PPP is considering their candidates among members also in their fourth term. Potential candidates include Ju Ho-young, Park Duk-hyum, Lee Jong-bae, Kim Do-eup, Kim Sang-hoon, and Han Ki-ho.

### How to distribute standing committee leadership

Following the legal timeline, the DP has expressed its commitment to finalize the distribution of standing committee chairpersons by 7 June. However, the two parties are sharply at odds over securing leadership in a few key standing committees.

As the largest party in the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA with 171 seats, **the DP insists on taking 11 out of the 18 standing committees, including the Legislation and Judiciary Committee and the House Steering Committee.** Meanwhile, the PPP contends that the chairperson of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee should be assigned to them, as it has been customary to have the NA Speaker and the chairperson of the Legislation and Judiciary Committee be from different parties. They are also strongly asserting their right to secure the chairpersonship of the House Steering Committee, which oversees the Presidential Office and has traditionally been given to the ruling party.

Negotiation began slowly last week, yet it is expected to be a long haul. At a recent workshop, DP First Deputy Floor Leader Park Seong-jun remarked, "the PPP has not presented a concrete proposal on what they want the composition to look like," adding that "the DP intends to comply with the National Assembly Act as the first principle for standing committee memberships."

If negotiations between the two parties drag on, experts project that the DP could potentially monopolize all 18 standing committees, following the precedent set during the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> NA, when the PPP boycotted negotiations and ended up forfeiting these positions.

During its orientation workshop for newly elected members, the DP shared its legislative agenda, setting forth four guiding principles for the operation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA: **Democratic, Proactive, Responsible, and One-Team.**

Led by Jin Sung-joon, the chairperson of the DP Policy Committee, **the party also introduced 56 bills to be prioritized in the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA.** These bills were selected from those vetoed by the President, those that stalled in the 21<sup>st</sup> NA, or those related to the party's election pledges.

The following is a selection of these priority bills with **highest potential impact to industry when implemented:**

## Democratic Party's legislative agendas for 22<sup>nd</sup> NA

[Table 1 to 4: DP's legislative agendas for 22<sup>nd</sup> NA, by topic]



### Protect small businesses, franchisees, and consumers

#### Goal

- Establish a fair market place in online platforms
- Supplement the current system to prevent and remedy consumer damage
- Establish a franchisee organization registration system and obligating franchisors to respond to consultation requests from registered organizations

#### Relevant Acts (*"to be newly introduced"*)

- "Online Platform Act"
- Act on the Consumer Protection in Electronic Commerce (E-commerce Act)
- Fair Transactions in Franchise Business Act

#### Relevant ministry

- Korea Fair Trade Commission



## Support Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

### Goal

- Establish legal grounds for protecting SMEs' technology and data from technology infringement by prime contractors

### Relevant Acts

- Small and Medium Enterprise Cooperatives Act
- Act on the Promotion of Mutually Beneficial Cooperation between Large Enterprises and Small and Medium Enterprises (SML Cooperation Promotion Act)

### Relevant ministry

- Ministry of SMEs and Startups



## Safe rates system

### Goal

- Introduce a safe rates system for the trucking transport business
- Protect the rights and interests of truck owners
- Promote traffic safety

### Relevant Act

- Trucking Transport Business Act

### Relevant ministry

- Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport



## Renewable energy

### Goals

- Strengthen the spread of renewable energy to fulfill international commitments (COP28 – tripling renewable energy by 2030)
- Improve the current system to support the corporates' RE100 implementation

### Relevant Acts (*"to be newly introduced"*)

- "Act for Promotion of Wind Power Supply"
- "Renewable Energy Supply Expansion Act"
- "Carbon Neutral Business Act"
- "Agrivoltaic System Support Act"

### Relevant ministry

- Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy



Industry stakeholders should closely monitor the development of these bills and prepare countermeasures, such as seeking professional support to understand the specific motivations of key elected officials introducing the bills, as well as the various relevant stakeholders' stances on the given issue.

Notably, the DP's commitment to prioritize the passage of the 'Act for Promotion of Wind Power Supply' as a key initiative stands out, demonstrating the party's support for relevant industrial sectors. The strong consensus within the party leadership, built through the efforts of NA members like Kim Won-i, who initially introduced the wind power promotion legislation in the 21<sup>st</sup> NA, is likely to continue to champion its passage in the upcoming term.

The minor ruling party, PPP, is expected to release its legislative agenda and guiding principles for the 22<sup>nd</sup> NA on 30 May at its orientation workshop. Highlights of the PPP's announcements will accordingly be covered in our next issue.

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