

The 22nd NA standing committee formation

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The 22nd NA committee formation completed

On 27 June, the National Assembly(NA) held a plenary session to vote for the remaining Vice Speaker and 7 standing committee chairperson positions allocated for the ruling People Power Party (PPP), signaling **the completion of the standing committee formation process after prolonged political confrontation**. Six-term PPP NA member Joo Ho-young was elected as the Vice Speaker, and the 7 standing committee chairpersons are also finalized (see Figure 1).

As the 22nd NA started its term on 30 May, an intense partisan clash was triggered over the distribution of the 18 standing committee chairperson positions. Specifically, the ruling minority PPP and the opposition majority Democratic Party (DP) struggled over the chairperson positions of both the NA Legislation and Judiciary Committee, which acts as a gatekeeper of legislation prior to them being sent to the plenary session for final vote, and the NA House Steering Committee, which oversees the Office of the President.

On 10 June, while emphasizing the importance of meeting the legal deadline for standing committee formation, the DP unilaterally elected 11 chairpersons, including the chairpersons of the two most controversial standing committees. The DP refused to concede to the PPP's demand for these two chairperson positions; in response, the PPP boycotted all standing committee meetings.

However, on 24 June, the PPP Floor Leader Choo Kyung-ho announced that the PPP will take the 7 remaining chairperson positions, ceasing the PPP's two-week long boycott.

Reasons behind the PPP's return from the boycott

① Ineffectiveness of boycott

The PPP's boycott of the legislative hearing regarding the investigation into the death of a Marine Corps corporal yielded minimal impact. Instead, it was assessed internally by the PPP itself that the boycott only allowed the DP to dominate the hearing.

② Need to secure practical benefit

Within the PPP, there was a growing opinion that the the party needed to return to the standing committees to engage in policymaking and the legislative process, and to secure some level of practical benefit by at least taking the remaining 7 chairperson positions, which are closely related to national security and economic affairs.

③ Alignment with the Office of the President

PPP Floor Leader Choo was reported to have proposed that the PPP take the 7 chairperson positions after aligning with the Office of the President during the party caucus. The party believed that the situation could get more complicated if the DP were to take the chairperson positions of the NA Intelligence Committee, National Defense Committee, and the Foreign Affairs and Unification Committee in particular.

Consequently, Choo expressed his intention to resign for failing to achieve the party's objectives during the standing committee formation negotiations. Choo was absent from the public eye for five days, but due to the strong appeals from both his party and the Office of the President, Choo returned to the party leadership role, pledging to "burn the bridge" and unite all 108 lawmakers to stand together and fight against the DP's parliamentary dictatorship.

Figure 1 : The chairmanship of the 22nd National Assembly



* SMP: Seoul Metropolitan Police | MOEF : Ministry of Economy and Finance | KCC: Korea Communications Commission | GPP: Gyeonggi Provincial Police | MOLIT: Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport | SMG: Seoul Metropolitan Government



Things are expected to move fast in the NA going forward. Although both the PPP and the DP have forecast a strong confrontation, the DP's grip over several major standing committees means that **effective control of the NA is expected to remain with the DP** accordingly. In particular, there is a high possibility that major bills will be passed expeditiously in standing committees where the DP holds chairperson positions.

Therefore, it will be important to **identify the risks and opportunities presented** amidst a rapidly evolving political landscape, coupled with close monitoring of standing committee discussions, in order to develop optimal response strategies.

The 22nd NA prospects – going forward

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