

December 1, 2021

The Editor
Wall Street Journal

Dear Editor,

I regret that your editorial “Hong Kong Says Vote—or Else” (November 30) contains factual inaccuracies and baseless assumptions.

Legislative Council (LegCo) Election, originally due to be held in Hong Kong on September 6, 2020, was postponed for one year owing to the public health risk posed by COVID-19 pandemic, not because of the result of the District Council election as you stated. With the pandemic effectively contained, The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has now scheduled the election to take place on December 19 as promised.

To suggest that “Hong Kongers risk harsh penalties if they protest in public” is not only factually incorrect but also scaremongering. Basic Law and Hong Kong’s National Security Law clearly stipulate that the basic rights and freedoms, including freedom of speech, of the press, of publication, of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration shall be protected. However, any manipulation to sabotage an election will not be tolerated. It is perfectly in line with international practice for the HKSAR government to take enforcement action against law-breakers who attempt to sabotage elections.

Under the new electoral system, people from all walks of life with different opinions about government policies are able to participate in the political system, as long as they uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the HKSAR. This pledge of allegiance is no different from that required of public office holders around the world. It is also totally untrue for the claim that ‘Beijing has since imposed new electoral rules that require all candidates to receive pre-approval from the Communist Party. Please ascertain your facts.

We encourage all eligible civic-minded voters to take part in the LegCo

Election next month. Surely every government would want its residents to cast valid votes in any election. Therefore, I am shocked by the statement of your Editorial Board that “Boycotts and blank ballots are one of the last ways for Hong Kongers to express their political views”. Please be advised that inciting another person not to vote, or to cast invalid vote, by activity in public during election period is an offence under section 27A of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance, irrespective whether the incitement is made in Hong Kong or abroad. We reserve the right to take necessary action.

Yours sincerely,

Erick Tsang
Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region