

PRESS RELEASE

2nd September, 2016

ELECTION PLATFORM FOR KIDS WHO HAVE NO VOTES

Legislative Council Election is approaching, but there is no case for 1.1 million children under the age of 18 who have no right to vote. Children and young people are the future of Hong Kong as the saying goes, however, what is the proportion of the election platforms inking on the health, development, education and wellbeing of children? No matter what the political stand of each candidate is, the election platform on children is the crystal ball for the community to see clearly the vision of the candidates on how to develop and plan for Hong Kong in a visionary and sustainable way.

In this regard, the **Hong Kong Committee on Children’ s Rights** has sent an open letter to all 289 Candidates of the Legislative Council Election on 3rd August, requesting them to highlight what they have written for children in their election platform for public’ s information so as to bring children’ s voice into the legislature. Until 20th August, we have received 58 replies from Candidates. They come from 11 political parties, 3 of them having independent background. The reply rate is 20%.

The election platform on children could be categorized into the main areas as below:

| Policy/System | Education | Health/ Development | Child Protection | Children and Family | Child Poverty |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Actualize the Convention on the Rights of the Child ● Set up Children’ s Commission ● Set up Children and Youth Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve Integrated Education and pass the Special Education Needs Bill ● Carry out small-class teaching, improve the teachers-students and teachers-classes ratio ● Actualize the education right of ethnic minority | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve children’ s mental health with counseling support, which includes an increase in school counseling teachers and school social workers to prevent suicide. ● Change children’ s habit of eating junk food ● Formulate | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reform the Child Fatality Review mechanism ● Set up Child Protection Subcommittee in Legislative Council ● Make reference to international standards and professional bodies’ views to review the definition, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve child care services ● Expand the After School Care Program ● Provide relevant supporting services, education, training and publicity before carrying out the “Parental Responsibility Model” under the proposed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Increase subsidies on computer and online facilities to improve digital divide ● Improve CSSA policy to meet the practical needs of those in need ● Increase subsidies for extra-curricular activities |

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| | <p>children, and ensure education in Chinese as a second language</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cancel TSA and replace it with other learning assessments such as random sampling to lower the pressure of school children ● Streamline School-based Assessment (SBA) ● Quicken the steps to actualize 15-year free education ● Reform the New Senior Secondary Curriculum ● Enhance civic education and human rights education ● Increase Hong Kong-based history education | <p>policies to encourage breastfeeding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Formulate Child Health Policy ● Advocate sports, culture and arts career for children ● Address the issue of heavy school bags and expensive text books | <p>handling procedures, and resource inputs on domestic violence and sexual violence to protect children</p> | <p>new legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Carry out family friendly policies and measures ● Carry out Family Impact Assessment | |
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Our observation and analysis are as below:

1. Candidates have put great emphasis on education, including Integrated Education, TSA, educational support for ethnic minority children, etc. Those are the policies that have

received general public criticism for the past years. Candidates have also mentioned frequently the problem of teenage suicide, the need to provide emotional support and children' s pressure. All these have been hooked up with media coverage and public concern.

2. Many candidates do not push forward election platform independently for children. Instead, they have incorporated children into the area of family care such as child care services, after school care program, family friendly measures... etc. This might be related to the fact that children have no vote. Instead, family care might help them to canvass for votes from parents.
3. Although there have been many cases of children dying from unnatural causes in Hong Kong, and although the figure of child abuse is increasing, majority of the candidates do not stand up for these children in their election platform. It is indeed disappointing that only individual candidates have raised the need of reforming the existing child death fatality review mechanism; and the need of referencing to the international standard to address it, etc.
4. Majority of the election platforms only talk about the need of increasing resources and services. They rarely even mention the amelioration of policies and systems. This could not help improve the situation of children caught in policy gaps.
5. Juvenile justice, children in alternative care, stateless children, refugee children, children of different genders have become a hot potato. None of these topics could be found on the election platform of any candidate. This makes those children who are most badly in need of support and assistance to be further marginalized.
6. However, we are at least contented with the fact that many candidates from various political parties have put "Set up the Children' s Commission" in their election platform. They have not forgotten the motion that has twice been passed in the legislature with unanimous votes. This reflects the need of an independent body to defend children' s rights and their wellbeing, and to ensure children' s perspectives could be fully considered in the policy making process.

Election will come in two days. No matter what the result would be, the Hong Kong Committee on Children' s Rights would continue to monitor the work of the Legislative Councilors in the coming future so as to ensure that the pledges they have made to children in their election platforms would be fulfilled and implemented according to the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Should you have any questions towards this press release, please contact Ms. Billy Wong, Executive Secretary of Hong Kong Committee on Children' s Rights at 2324 9782.

Hong Kong Committee on Children' s Rights



Please visit our Facebook page Frustrated Superman – Children's Voice X Legislative Council HK to listen to the voice of the children in Hong Kong:

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Youtube videos:

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