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Allocation of seats 'favours business'

LEGISLATORS yesterday accused the Government of bias towards the industrial and business sectors in the distribution of the seven newly-formed functional constituency seats.

They also questioned why the administration had allowed more seats for functional constituencies instead of creating two more directly-elected seats, as proposed in the Executive and Legislative Councils' consensus model.

Mr Szeto Wah, who was the only member to vote against the Legislative Council (Electoral Provisions) (Amendment) Bill, said councillors who accepted the expansion in functional constituencies were breaking their earlier promise.

The bill seeks to increase the number of functional constituency seats from 14 to 21 in 1991.

Sharing his view, Miss Leung Wai-tung said the nature of functional constituencies contravened the spirit of democracy, which allowed every citizen equal right to vote.

Both the existing and proposed distribution of functional constituency seats had neglected the importance of the grassroots constituents, said Miss Leung and Mr Szeto.

Three of the seven new functional constituency seats are given to the securities and insurance sector, the construction and building industry and tourist services.

Mr Szeto, who represents teachers in Legco, called for an additional seat for the education sector, whose size significantly outnumbered that of other constituencies.

"Education affects every family in Hongkong. It is hard to understand why it

cannot be allowed one more seat, while the business sectors got several," he said.

Mr Szeto, who is the secretary-general of the Confederation of Trade Unions, also asked for a seat for the labour sector in addition to the existing two, which were occupied by the left-wing and right-wing unions.

In a thinly-veiled attack on his colleague, Mr Tam Yiu-chung, who represents the labour sector, Mr Szeto said people who had pledged to sacrifice votes to fight for the rice bowls of the workers had betrayed their promise.

"These people have failed to represent the interests of their class and they are not actively campaigning for votes," said Mr Szeto.

In reply, Mr Tam reiterated his call for a third seat for workers, which he said accounted for half of the population.