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# Battle the liberals are expecting to lose

THE Kwun Tong electoral college for next month's Legislative Council polls has been reduced to a convenient forum by a minority group of district board members airing their grievances in public.

It is almost certain that political moderate Mr Poon Chi-fai, the board's representative on the legislative assembly, will be re-elected by a two-thirds majority.

However, liberal activists on the board, despite facing a battle they do not think they can win, are determined to field social worker Mr Li Wah-ming to fight against Mr Poon.

Mr Li, who was defeated by Mr Poon in the 1985 Legco election, admitted that his task was an "impossible dream".

He is well aware that his domain of influence can hardly go beyond his 11 allies on the 35-vote electoral college.

Yet, he is prepared to lose for a simple cause.

"All we want to achieve by taking part in this election is to force the other camp to face the public in open election forums.

"I don't even intend to lobby for support from other board members," said Mr Li.

The territory's 19 district boards are grouped into 10 electoral colleges to return 10 legislators.

TODAY we look at the Kwun Tong electoral college, where Meeting Point vice-chairman Li Wah-ming is prepared to be defeated by incumbent legislator Poon Chi-fai. ANDY HO and BELLETTE LEE report.



## THE BASIC LAW

"Challenging the conservatives openly will make no difference to the election result.

"But it is our duty to let the residents know what has been going on in the board.

"Why should I let him win unopposed?" said Mr Li.

If Mr Poon was returned uncontested, he added, it would create a wrong public impression that Kwun Tong District Board was working harmoniously.

The rift between the conservatives and the liberal activists on the board is longstanding.

The liberals managed to break new ground in the district board elections in March when newcomers, including Mr Chan Kar-kok and Miss Au Yuk-har, edged out some conservative kaifong leaders.

Soon after the polls however, the majority camp of conservatives stood united in preventing the liberals

from grabbing the chairmanships of the full board as well as its working groups.

Two weeks ago, the liberals suffered another blow when their attempt to co-opt Meeting Point activist Mr Luk Shun-tim into a working group of the board was foiled.

Mr Li and his allies walked out of the board meeting in protest against the majority camp's "high-handed" way in hand-picking their only numbers as co-opted members for the sub-committees.

Eleven liberal board members are drafting an open letter to expose what they call undemocratic dominance by the conservative majority on the district advisory body.

Board member Mr Chan Cheong of the political magazine *October Review* has taken things a step further by boycotting the Legco election.

He has given up his privilege as an elector in the Kwun Tong electoral college.

Mr Poon, on the other hand, maintained that he had toed an impartial line.



Chan Cheong

Describing himself as an independent candidate, Mr Poon said he had neither supported nor been supported by the board's different cliques.

"I have no political inclination and I am not affiliated to any political faction.

"I am backed by my colleagues only because of my capability and performance," he said.

While admitting that the liberals and the kaifong leaders are hostile to each other, he commented: "The pressure group members on the board are comparatively radical."

Mr Poon said he was a prudent politician who preferred consensus at all levels.

"No matter who my opponent will be and what political background he has, I will respect him and the election system," said Mr Poon, adding that he was confident of winning.