



[Hongkongers Select Pro-Democracy Candidates for Upcoming Elections in September](#)

More than 600,000 Hongkongers voted to select pro-democracy candidates to compete in September's upcoming elections for the city's Legislative Council. Residents turned out in significant numbers, a move that signals continued resistance against Beijing's recent decision to impose a broad national security law in Hong Kong. The primary was designed to ramp up support for parties across the pro-democracy movement, and the overall turnout tripled organizers' expectations. The results will be used to narrow down the list of candidates to represent the democratic camp in September's elections. Voters cast their ballots despite a spike in coronavirus cases, which has prompted authorities to reimpose social distancing measures, and warnings claiming that they were violating the newly-implemented national security law.

Hong Kong pro-democracy activists praised residents for demonstrating their determination to have their voices heard by casting ballots in the primary election, even in the face of Beijing's crackdown and the ongoing health crisis. Activist Joshua Wong stated that "When China attempts to crush dissents with fear and force, nearly 600,000 Hongkongers have used our actions today to ward off fear, cast ballots in this first and maybe last primary, and prove to the world that our spirit of resistance will not be killed." Benny Tai, a Hong Kong law professor who helped organize the election, added that "Hong Kong people – after all these years since 2003 – have demonstrated to the world and also to the authorities, that we have not given up to strive for democracy." In addition to Tai, ex-lawmaker Au Nok-hin, the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute (PORI), and the political group Power for Democracy also helped to set up the election.

The primary was designed to select candidates across five geographic constituencies for the upcoming legislative council elections in September. The constituencies are made up of Kowloon East, Kowloon West, Hong Kong Island, New Territories East, and New Territories, with the results allowing organizers to nominate about 30 final candidates for the September elections. Currently, the Legislative Council of Hong Kong consists of a majority of pro-establishment lawmakers who side with Beijing on major issues. The council is a 70-seat body, and pro-democracy candidates hope to win a majority of more than 35 seats.

Throughout the two-day vote, Hongkongers lined up at over 200 polling stations despite the heat and news of a fresh COVID-19 outbreak in the city. Since all voters have to verify their identities and residential addresses in person, the primary election organizers had to set up polling stations throughout Hong Kong. To do so, over 30 pro-democracy shop owners turned their establishments into polling stations during the course of the voting period. Overall turnout was higher than expected, especially considering that Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Erick Tsang stated in the days leading up to the election that participation may violate the national security legislation imposed on the administrative region in recent weeks. Tsang warned that those "organizing, planning, and participating" could be breaching the new law, however Hongkongers still showed up to cast their ballots in large numbers.