

27th April, 2017

Clerk to Subcommittee on Children's Rights
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
Hong Kong

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have read the government paper regarding the proposed establishment of a commission on children, provided earlier to this Council and the general public. After thorough considerations, I have decided to oppose a government commission on children if it is going to be led by some bureaucrats or officials in the government. I will support a commission on children only when it is independent from government interference and led by children's rights advocates.

I have provided my arguments against a government commission on children in my speeches, which have been attached to this letter, during the public hearing of the subcommittee panel on children's rights, held a week ago. I do sincerely hope that the subcommittee would put my humble views into consideration and reconsider the proposal for establishing a commission on children.

Yours sincerely,

Kong Pak Ho

Encl. My speeches in the public hearing of the subcommittee panel on children rights

Mr. Chairman, it is my great pleasure to appear before this subcommittee panel and voice my objection to the proposed establishment of a commission on children. In the next few minutes, I shall explain my position in a thorough way. However, before that, I would like to clarify my position first. It is always in my mind that our youngsters are the future pillars of our society. By no means my opposition to the proposal is an act against all children in this great city.

Mr. Chairman, since this government took office in 2012, we have seen a flood of counterproductive government commissions and departments, including a government commission on reduction of salt and sugar in food and the Innovation and Technology Bureau. The Bureau, claimed to foster innovation and support the technology sector in this city, has pushed forward no major policy initiative since its formation in 2015 and kept asking this Council for more public funding. With its department chief bragging about how distinguished he might be in an online interview, the Bureau serves similar functions with the Innovation and Technology Commission and countless government offices in which the latter have attained much more fruitful achievements than the former. In view of that, I fear the proposed commission on children will become yet another black hole of public funding, spending a lot and doing nothing to help our youngsters.

Mr. Chairman, I cherish all children in this wonderful society. I admire their courage, earnestness and innocence, which have never been viewed as a politician's personalities. Nevertheless, my point of view on how to cultivate our youngsters' endless talents is very different with that from this government. I think the role of government in our youngsters' lives should be enlarged only when it is actually doing something to help our youngsters. However, what I have seen during these years is the exact opposite: many government ministers boasted about how passionate they might be when it comes to caring our youngsters, but nothing has been accomplished. Remember, when countless parents and students in this city desperately pleaded for the termination of the notorious territory-wide system assessment, their opinion fell on deaf ears in this government. I am reminded by what my relatives had always said to me, actions speak louder than words. Ironically, actions are those which this government always lacks of.

Mr. Chairman, our youngsters need someone to hear their voices and remove their yokes, not someone to lecture them on how to embrace positive thinking, not some wishy-washy politicians being the fake bridge between the government and our youngsters. It is meaningless to further extend this bureaucracy when it has been unwilling to hear the voices of countless stakeholders in this system and do what it needs to do.

Mr. Chairman, I sincerely hope that this subcommittee will find my views echoing. I, therefore, urge this subcommittee to do the right thing: reconsider this proposal, strengthen the role of our children's rights advocate and pour more public funding into those advocates.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, I may need to clarify my position yet again. I will support a government commission only when it is led by children's rights advocates as I do not want the commission on children to be led by some bureaucrats or become another rubber stamp in this government. I think the proposed commission on children should be independent from government interference and help children in this great society improving their woeful living environment

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.