

Moderate pan-democrat seeks NPC seat

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Veteran pan-democratic lawmaker Frederick Fung Kin-kee, known for his moderate stance towards Beijing, is joining the race for a seat on the state legislature, while pan-democratic groups are working to use their votes strategically.

The Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood's standing committee yesterday endorsed Mr Fung to participate in the National People's Congress election.

Mr Fung resigned as association chairman in the wake of its poor results in November's district council elections.

The decision came a day after the Democratic Party decided to field legislator James To Kun-sun and fellow party member Mak Hoi-wah in the poll.

The pan-democratic camp has about 100 voters on the 1,231-member election panel, which is scheduled to pick 36 local deputies to the NPC on January 25.

Mr Fung, whose party is known for its policy of simultaneously "negotiating with and confronting" Beijing, joined the Provisional Legislative Council in 1996. The council was set up by Beijing when the "through-train" arrangement for the Legislative Council after the handover failed.

He was defeated in his previous attempt in an NPC election, in 2002.

Meanwhile, the Democratic Party has set up a committee to co-ordinate its voting strategy for the deputies' election with other parties from the pan-democratic camp. The party's vice-chairman, Sin Chung-kai, said they had not yet discussed strategy with other parties.

The party had come up with three criteria for making nominations - the candidate must support democratic development on the mainland and in Hong Kong, urge Beijing to endorse the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and offer help to Hongkongers who stay on the mainland.

Ronny Tong Ka-wah, of the Civic Party, said the party had not yet discussed its strategy and no guidelines had been established for its nominations.

He said the party would be willing to work closely with the Democratic Party to make the best use of the pan-democratic camp's votes.

The **Professional Commons**, which was founded by pan-democratic Election Committee members who supported Civic Party legislator Alan Leong Kah-kit for chief executive last year, plans to organise a forum and invite local NPC candidates to explain their platforms.

Its vice-chairman, Charles Peter Mok, said the group would probably collaborate with pan-democratic parties to unite their votes.

Nominations open today and will close on January 16.