



Written by [Alex Newman](#) on September 10, 2012

Hong Kong Votes Amid Protests Against Beijing's Communist "Brainwashing"

Hong Kong voters went to the polls on September 9 to support liberty-minded candidates after months of growing protests and even hunger strikes against proposed communist "brainwashing" in government schools, which opponents said was an effort to indoctrinate children into supporting the brutal dictatorship ruling over mainland China. Anti-Beijing sentiment is still at an all-time high and continues to grow.



The legislative elections, in which voters selected over half of Hong Kong's lawmakers while mostly pro-Beijing special-interest groups and elites chose the rest, were seen by analysts as a crucial milestone. The vote marked the first time that a majority of lawmakers were chosen by the electorate, and the results will play a key role in determining Hong Kong's future governance.

Citizens opposed to the increasing influence of the communist regime in Beijing over Hong Kong did succeed in maintaining control over at least one third of the legislature — and with it, veto power. The results will allow Hong Kong to block constitutional changes that would further the expansion of power by pro-Chinese Communist Party forces.

Pro-Beijing forces did relatively well considering the surging opposition to mainland communist scheming and their small numbers of supporters in the city. According to the *New York Times* and various analysts, the Chinese regime-supporting "Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong" used [various gimmicks](#) to garner more seats. Some even accused the mainland dictatorship of unlawfully subsidizing the pro-regime party.

However, among the legislative seats filled directly by voters based on geographic representation, results indicated that a majority went to an alliance of freedom-oriented candidates under the "pan-democrats" banner. It appears that the pan-democrats also managed to secure at least three of the five newly created so-called "superseats," which are voted on by virtually the entire electorate. On top of that, the special-interest groups that select almost half of Hong Kong's lawmakers added an additional five pan-democrats to the liberty-minded coalition — not much, but enough to help block an all-out takeover by Beijing supporters.

"Many people have remarked how this election has been a referendum on the new administration, and a chance to say no to Beijing," [explained](#) Chinese University of Hong Kong history Professor Willy Wo-Lap Lam. "Plus Beijing's overt interference in Hong Kong has given rise to concerns among the middle class. Many people have noted Beijing's interference is becoming more overt and aggressive."

The narrow electoral success against the well-funded supporters of the Chinese regime was attributed by analysts to escalating anti-communist sentiment in recent months — especially the scandal surrounding student brainwashing, which sparked a huge backlash. When authorities announced the plan to introduce mandatory "national history" and "patriotism" courses into the school curriculum, tens of thousands of parents, teachers, and students assembled outside the Hong Kong government



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headquarters.

Estimates placed the number of marchers at between 35,000 and 120,000 at various points throughout the uprising. Some of the demonstrators camped out or even orchestrated a hunger strike in a bid to stop what they viewed as communist Chinese propaganda and indoctrination aimed at ensuring mainland domination over Hong Kong.

According to critics, the proposed curriculum whitewashed the Tiananmen Square massacre, the brutality of mass-murdering communist dictator Mao Zedong, and the millions of Chinese who died of starvation as a result of communist central planning. It was aimed, opponents say, at ensuring that Beijing's influence and control over Hong Kong is preserved into the future.

However, sensing defeat, the appointed Beijing-backed leader of the semi-autonomous island retreated on the mandatory "patriotic education" scheme the day before the legislative vote. "Following this announcement, I hope that education will return to education, campus life will return to normal," Hong Kong Chief Executive Leung Chun-ying said at a press conference, adding that the communist education plot would no longer be mandatory for schools.

Analysts said the last-minute announcement may have helped contain the exploding anti-communist outrage from manifesting itself fully at the polls. But it was not enough to secure a full victory for pro-Beijing forces despite overt and potentially unlawful interference in Hong Kong politics by the totalitarian rulers on the mainland.

The proposed brainwashing campaign, meanwhile, is only a symptom of a larger issue: the mainland regime's effort to solidify its grip over one of the few remaining bastions of free markets in the world. "In the short term, national education is an important issue, but in broader terms many people are concerned about the central government's influence in Hong Kong," [explained](#) Chinese University of Hong Kong political scientist Ma Ngok.

Despite the apparent retreat on the brainwashing scheme, many analysts and activists are still not convinced that the education battle is over. "We are also worried about whether the education bureau will funnel lots of funding to encourage the schools to teach the curriculum," activist Yip Po Lam with the Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese was [quoted](#) as saying.

The Civil Alliance Against National Education, which strongly opposed the brainwashing scheme, welcomed the decision to drop the mandatory curriculum as well. However, a spokesperson for the organization still [expressed](#) numerous concerns about it even after officially becoming "optional."

The election also came amid the highest level of dissatisfaction in almost a decade with the way Hong Kong's government deals with the dictatorship ruling over mainland China, according to the Hong Kong Transition Project. That was partly reflected in the high voter turnout, which was more than eight percent above the participation in the 2008 elections.

Aside from the protests against brainwashing, Hong Kong has seen numerous other mass demonstrations this year. In July, for example, a rally demanding more self-governance attracted nearly half a million marchers according to estimates. Meanwhile, surveys show that some 20 percent of Hong Kong residents admit to having participated in at least one protest this year.

Until 1997, Hong Kong remained under British protection as a colony. Britain handed control over the semi-autonomous territory to China that year and Hong Kong has managed to retain many of its freedoms thus far — a free press, the right to protest, one of the freest markets in the world, and more.



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When sovereignty was transferred to China, the autocratic regime firmly promised to safeguard Hong Kong's traditional and long-cherished freedoms. The communist dictatorship even said that one day — though no earlier than 2017 to 2020 — the people would be allowed to largely govern themselves, even selecting their own leader and lawmakers.

Like most communist promises, however, it appears increasingly possible that it could be broken — if not openly, at least in an underhanded manner aimed at quietly perpetuating Beijing's control over Hong Kong's political system. Still, with the pan-democrats having earned veto power in the election, it might be harder as liberty-minded lawmakers have the power to block any bogus “democracy” scams hatched by communist functionaries.

Hong Kong voters quoted in news reports expressed a wide range of sentiments regarding the election, with many saying they were glad that the city was slowly transitioning toward more self-government. There was also, however, serious doubts as to where it may lead. “Of course it's a good start,” salesman Jack Wong [told](#) the *Wall Street Journal*. “But even if real democracy actually happens, it will still be monitored by the central government.”

Silently and deceptively, the dictatorship in Beijing is flexing its muscles as it seeks tighter control over Hong Kong while giving the impression of increasing self-government, according to analysts. The growing battle between liberty-minded citizens in the city and the brutal communist regime on the mainland, however, may be just getting started.

Photo of protestors outside government headquarters in Hong Kong protesting communist “brainwashing” in Hong Kong schools: AP Images

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