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I probably don't need to remind anyone here that political parties—and their supporters—can often be deeply misogynistic. Just look at what's happening in the United States, and unfortunately, in Taiwan as well.

For those who may be aware, my department and I have been under attack by supporters of the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP), including online trolls, since Thursday—simply because of a post we made on social media. In that post, I criticized Legislator Wang Yi-Chuan for his comments about Taichung Mayor Ms. Lu Shiow-Yen's appearance and makeup during her visit to a flood-affected area.

Instead of focusing on her governance or her capacity to manage disaster relief, he remarked that her makeup was still intact in the photos released by the Taichung city government. This wasn't just unprofessional—it was textbook body-shaming. In our post, we clearly stated that such comments are a form of misogynistic attack, and that our Gender Equality Department strongly condemns any form of body-shaming against women in politics—regardless of their political affiliation.

The post went viral and received a mix of support and backlash. A spokesperson from the same faction as Wang within the DPP accused my department of "starting a civil war" within the party. From there, things escalated. The comment sections on our social media pages were flooded with hostility. A serious and necessary conversation about misogyny quickly turned into a wave of personal attacks—mostly directed at me.

There are two key issues I want to highlight from this incident.

First, one of the reasons my department exists is to remind our own party members that gender equality matters—especially to young female voters. No DPP member should be making sexist or discriminatory remarks. We must all be mindful of our words and actions, and how they may hurt women and members of the LGBTQ+ community.

Sadly, based on the reactions we've received—both online and in traditional media—it's clear that many within the DPP and its supporter base still do not recognize how damaging comments like Wang's can be. The voices and feelings of female voters are often disregarded. The lack of empathy or willingness to understand why such remarks are harmful to women—who are already frequent targets of body-shaming and mansplaining—is incredibly disappointing.

Second, in the face of threats from China, many DPP supporters seem to believe that loyalty to the party and to the pro-independence cause must override all other values—even progressive ones like gender equality. As a result, I've been accused of being a Chinese spy or a KMT/TMD sympathizer. It's absurd, of course—(laugh) I didn't know I was so important! Just yesterday, a Facebook fan page was created calling for my resignation.

Ironically, if I were to resign, it would be a real loss for the DPP. But beyond that, this situation reveals a larger problem: the toxic and irrational political atmosphere shaped by social media in Taiwan today. There is a serious lack of space for calm, rational debate. And unless we act, this will only get worse.

Something needs to be done. Honestly, I don't yet know exactly what that is. But maybe it's time for our party leadership—especially our chairperson—to make a strong public statement: that gender equality is just as essential to our identity as

anti-communism and democratic values.

Since I took office, my main goal has been to improve the DPP's approval rating among young women. We've held study groups, seminars, and summer camps to promote gender equality and progressive values within the party. It's deeply unfortunate that this incident may have undermined that progress.

But the path to dismantling misogyny in politics is a long one. Women in politics still face sexual harassment, body-shaming, and the glass ceiling—even within their own parties. That's why I've been advocating for the creation of all-women caucuses across all political parties. I believe this is one of the most effective ways to accelerate women's participation and leadership in politics.

I hope my story doesn't discourage you—but instead strengthens your resolve. Backlash is inevitable. It never disappears. That's why, as women, we must stay strong, stand together, and continue to grow.

Let me share some advice with all of you—and with every woman aspiring to a leadership role in politics:

1. Trust yourself. Silence your self-doubt. You are more capable—and far better—than most of your male counterparts. Throw away your imposter syndrome. You deserve to be where you are, and you deserve even more.
2. Become irreplaceable in your area of expertise within your party. This gives you power, security, and longevity in your political journey.

3. Build your team—your cheerleaders and allies. They are essential—not only in fighting sexism but also for your mental health. We know how brutal attacks on women in politics can be—not just on us, but on our families, our identities, and our very existence.

4. Don't view younger women as competition. Lead them, guide them, protect them—because I'm sure you once wished a female mentor had done the same for you.

5. Find your own faith—your own purpose. Give your team a reason to believe that what you are doing matters.

Thank you all for your attention.