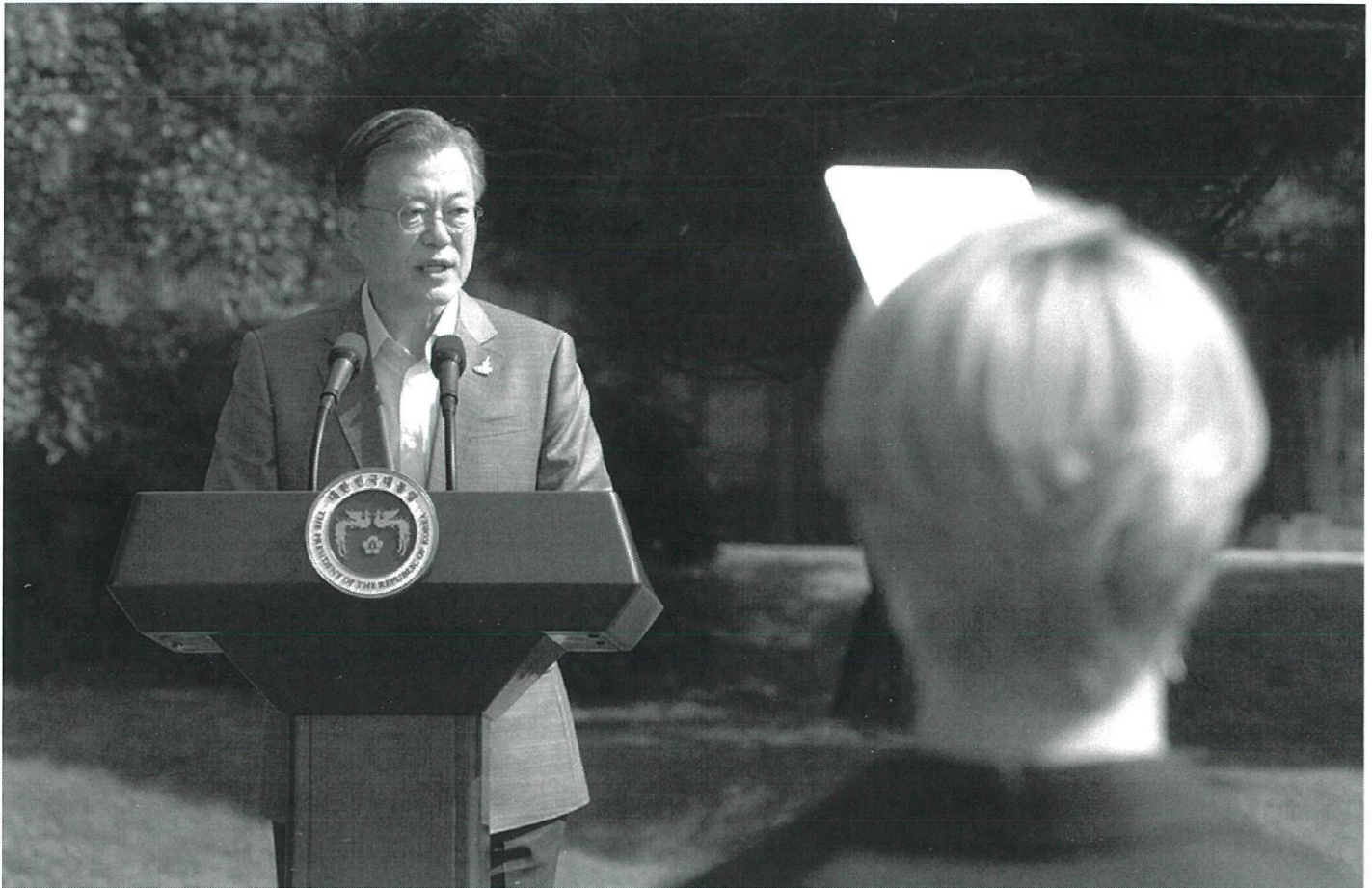


Moon vows full efforts to promote fairness in Youth Day message

News Eng. 1

2020-09-19 : 18:01



President Moon Jae-in speaks during the inaugural Youth Day event at Cheong Wa Dae, Saturday. Yonhap

President Moon Jae-in pledged his administration's every effort to enhance fairness in South Korea's society and economy, as he addressed the country's inaugural Youth Day ceremony at Cheong Wa Dae on Saturday.

"We still hear the rage of young people who complain that unfairness still persists" despite the government's campaign for fairness and justice as well as an egalitarian society, Moon said during the event held at Nokjiwon, a verdant garden inside the presidential compound.

Present at the event were young adults of various ages, jobs and residential areas, including the seven members of BTS, which achieved No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 songs chart with "Dynamite."

Moon said his government is "keenly aware of young people's strong demands for even further fairness and will surely meet them."

"We will further strengthen our efforts to investigate military service-related irregularities and tax evasion as well as root out violence in the sports community," he added.

His remarks came amid heated controversies over allegations that Justice Minister Choo Mi-ae's son

received special favors in connection with sick leave during his 2017 military service.

Last year, Moon also faced a strong public backlash against his appointment of Cho Kuk, one of his key aides, as justice minister in spite of suspicions that his daughter had been granted unjust, or illicit, perks over her schooling.

A growing number of youth are struggling to find quality jobs, with housing prices in Seoul and nearby regions having skyrocketed in recent years.

"We can see the examples of unfairness that seem to repeat themselves endlessly. Some cases of unfairness only reveal themselves in the process of working hard for fairness," Moon said without mentioning any specific examples. "This pertains to systemic unfairness, customary preferential treatment and the like."

The president pointed out that it will take more time for fairness take root as a "common practice" in South Korean society.

"Trial and error as well as conflicts are likely. However, we must have conviction to take the path toward fairness," he said. "Whenever unfair practices show up, we must work together to clearly address them one by one."

He also stressed the importance of a fair economy, saying it's about providing young adults with impartial opportunities and encouraging them to make "innovative" attempts with fewer worries about the consequences of failure.

"The government will boldly rectify unfairness that exists throughout the lives of the people to ensure that fairness takes root in our society. I hope our young people will take the lead and come together," Moon said.

The government designated the third Saturday in September of each year as Youth Day under the Framework Act on Young Adults enacted last month.

Meanwhile, BTS presented Moon with a purple-colored box as a "Year 2039 Gift" that will be stored at the National Museum of Korean Contemporary History in Seoul, and the contents of it will be unveiled at the 20th Youth Day event. (Yonhap)

vow, enhance, persist, keen(ly), perk, trial and error, impartial

What does Youth Day mean to you? Why did the government inaugurate it in your opinion?

What causes unfairness in Korea? Do you think society can become fair?

If society can become fair, how long will it take fairness to take root?

What recent news story has enraged you?

Do President Moon's words inspire you?

What is one perk of being a university student?

Do you think your professors are impartial?

When have you failed? What were the consequences?

How can the government make your life better?

What has enhanced the quality of your life?

The Kyunghyang Shinmun

Home

Opinions

Editorials

Articles

Korean Wave

Latest news

About us

Home > General News

A Monthly Income of 300,000 Won for All Citizens: A Basic Income Bill Motioned in the National Assembly for the First Time

By Jo Hyeong-guk

Posted on . 2020-09-18 19:54

Zoom + - | | | | | |



Transition Korea lawmaker Cho Jung-hun (48) motioned a bill that will have the state unconditionally hand out a minimum 300,000 won a month to all citizens as a basic income from 2022. In the past, lawmakers had proposed a bill to establish a research plan on the introduction of the basic income, but this is the first time that a bill stipulating the introduction of the basic income has been motioned. However, the latest proposal is expected to stir controversy, for it plans to secure fiscal resources by revising the existing welfare system instead of raising taxes.

On September 17, the National Assembly received a draft of the Basic Income Act, which lawmaker Cho motioned the previous day. Fourteen lawmakers jointly proposed the bill including Democratic Party of Korea lawmakers Kim Nam-kuk, Kim Seung-won, Kim Min-seok, Min Hyung-bae, Seo Young-seok, Yang Yi Won-young, Yang Jung-suk, Yoo Jung-ju, Lee Kyu-min, Lee Dong-ju, Lee Su-jin (proportional representation), and Huh Young and Justice Party lawmaker Ryu Ho-jeong.

Cho argued, "A large number of people are not guaranteed a minimum standard of living fit for humans due to the development of artificial intelligence and big data and automation technology and the widening polarization," and said, "The bill proposes to pay a minimum monthly income of 300,000 won from 2022, and to raise the amount to at least 500,000 won a month in 2029."

According to the draft, the government is to establish a basic income committee directly under the president and discuss the amount and fiscal resources. The basic income will be provided to foreign spouses of Korean nationals and foreigners with permanent residency as well as all Korean citizens.

In the case of minors, their basic income will be given to those with parental authority until they come of age, and if the money is spent improperly, the state can retrieve the money. Restrictions on the increase and decrease rate of the income along with the minimum income will be determined by law. The draft also stated that if authorities failed to determine the amount due to delayed discussions on the basic income, the state would pay a minimum 300,000 won per person every month from 2022, and at least 500,000 won a month in 2029.

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A Monthly Income of 300,000 Wo...
Prosecutors Conduct a Search an...
Chuseok with COVID-19: 200,000...
Civil Participation in Trials Misu...
Absurd Bills to Prevent a Second...
[Editorial] Prosecutors Indict For...
A Test of 1,440 People from 13...
[Editorial] Prosecutors Indict For...
Twenty- and Thirty-somethings...

News Eng. 5

Lawmaker Cho said that he would secure the fiscal resources by revising existing selective welfare policies and tax cuts that result in overlapping outcomes instead of raising taxes. His proposal is expected to draw criticism for it suggests that the government reduce existing welfare policies for the socially vulnerable in order to hand out an unconditional universal basic income. Even within the ruling Democratic Party, there are mixed arguments: some claiming that the government should secure fiscal resources for the basic income by revising welfare policies and raising taxes, while others argue that the government should promote a universal welfare state concentrating on income redistribution.

▶ Original Korean story (한글기사 원본)



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경향신문

unconditional(ly), controversy, standard of living, be fit for, revise, redistribution

What do you think of Cho Jung-hun's idea?

Is a basic income for all citizens fair?

What do you know about 시대전환?

Is 500,000 won a month by 2029 enough?

Why is Cho's motion likely to stir up controversy?

In your opinion, what is the minimum amount of income a month fit for humans?

How can parents spend minors' money improperly?

What is redistribution a euphemism for?

How is your standard of living?

Escape from North Korea: 'I'm free because of movies and English'

2020-09-19 : 09:12



Gettyimagesbank

For safety reasons, some important information about the author, including her name, was altered. — ED.

By Su-jin

Escaped from North Korea in 2006, arrived in South Korea in 2007 (repatriated from China in 2002 and 2004).

I attempted my first escape from North Korea after I began to learn about the outside world when I was in high school. I had some friends in North Korea who would share movies from South Korea and America. My mind was moved by what I had seen. I couldn't wait to get out of North Korea. I dreamed of escaping, but I was also terrified. It seemed it would be easier to fly to the moon.

The first time I tried to escape, I was captured quickly. The second time, I was in China for a few weeks, but I was captured again when someone informed the Chinese police about me.

Looking back, I am not surprised that I was captured so easily both times. I was young, naive and just ready to escape, hoping for a miracle. By the third attempt, I was much more mature and carefully planned things; I was paranoid rather than hopeful.

My early years in South Korea were fantastic, but then I got married and my life changed for the worst. He had been so nice before we got married — everyone thought he was so fantastic. But after I became his wife, he seemed to think I was his property. Publicly, he would talk about me being the queen of our home, pretending that he was running home to be with me. But at home, he would bully and dominate me. Finally, he beat me up so badly that I couldn't leave the house for weeks.

His beatings didn't break me. He had done everything he could to isolate me and that harsh beating was probably meant to show me what he could really do to me if I continued to disobey him. However, I didn't give up. I wanted to be a good wife, but I hadn't escaped from North Korea to live as an abused wife. When I told him that I wanted to learn English, he tried to block me. He was clearly frustrated that I was so determined. I started studying on my own; then I found TNKR (Teach North Korean Refugees). He can't speak English so I guess that is a reason he saw my desire to learn English as a challenge to his authority.

He finally agreed I could study one-on-one, but only with female tutors and I had to return home after studying. He refused to let me study at a traditional university, so I found a cyber university. He finally relented, as long as I didn't study on the university campus or interact directly with other students. He was so determined not to let me associate and mingle with others. I suspect that he even put a tracking device on my phone because he would know the places I had been.

In North Korea, my life had changed because of foreign movies. In South Korea, everything changed because of studying at TNKR and a cyber university. My self-esteem had been broken, but English and learning as a student gave me something new, gave me confidence in myself, and reminded me that I shouldn't throw away my life as an abused wife.

Finally, I could take on the challenge to leave him even though I knew my life would be difficult as a divorced woman in South Korean society. My tutors had no idea about my situation, but their messages asking me if I wanted to study always delighted me. And of course, the TNKR leaders who knew about my situation would check on me, giving me more confidence that I could succeed and letting me know that I was not alone.

The divorce was difficult. I had to go into hiding for a while, moving from place to place. At last, I am free. I am going through a healing time now.

Coronavirus has made everything more difficult, but thankfully I escaped from my terrible situations — in both North Korea and South Korea — so I can live even through this difficult time, but as a free woman. I am now re-establishing my identity and gaining confidence in myself as a human being. I am free because of movies and English.

Casey Lartigue Jr., co-founder of the Teach North Korean Refugees Global Education Center, was the 2017 winner of the "Social Contribution" Prize from the Hansarang Rural Cultural Foundation and the 2019 winner of the "Challenge Maker" Award from Challenge Korea. TNKR co-founder Eunkoo Lee translated the refugee's remarks from Korean to English.

can't wait to, naive, paranoid, bully, relent, mingle

Why do you think I chose this article?

What would you like to ask Su-jin?

What would you like to ask her ex-husband?

What movie has moved you?

When has someone tried to block you??

Is it a good idea to challenge authority? Have you ever done it?

What challenge have you taken on this year?

I can't wait to

I am determined to

..... has always delighted me.