

Japan: Draft JRP constitutional amendment plan calls for restricting freedom of expression

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Japan Restoration Party (JRP) draft guidelines for amendments to the Japanese Constitution call for restricting freedom of expression in “certain cases,” among other measures to strengthen controls on Japanese citizens.

“There are certain cases wherein ‘freedom of expression’ is to be restricted,” the draft guidelines state. The draft, revealed May 28 and titled, “Course of action on discussions regarding the Constitution,” also declares, “The responsibility of the nation to protect the standing of the family (legally registered marriages) will be regulated.”

The guidelines are expected to be completed by the JRP caucus during the current Diet session.

The draft also tackles the role and function of the Imperial Family, stating that an amended constitution would “confirm Japan as a constitutional monarchy,” and, “the Constitution and the Imperial Household Law are to include provisions confirming the principle of male Imperial succession.”

The draft plan appears to have been strongly influenced by JRP caucus chief and former Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry Takeo Hiranuma as well as erstwhile members of JRP co-leader Shintaro Ishihara’s Sunrise Party, which merged with the JRP last year.

JRP co-leader and Osaka Mayor Toru Hashimoto and other party figures, however, expressed doubts over enshrining protection for registered marriages — the “standing of the family” — in the Constitution. The draft is expected to continue to evolve, though it now looks possible the document could plant seeds of conflict between Hashimoto and his JRP caucus.

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* <http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20130529p2a00m0na013000c.html>