

Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i [ymgyngoriad y Pwyllgor Biliau Diwygio](#) ar [Fil Senedd Cymru \(Aelodau ac Etholiadau\)](#).

This response was submitted to the [Reform Bill Committee consultation](#) on the [Senedd Cymru \(Members and Elections\) Bill](#).

**SCME438 Ymateb gan: | Response from: Sarah Cook**

---

Sirs

I am writing to express my anger and dismay about the proposed reform of the Senate to bring in another 36 new Members, which I believe is a huge waste of money that could be better spent elsewhere.

Wales is a democracy, but it feels less and less like it. The planned closed list system for Senedd elections and the enlarged constituencies will further estrange Senedd Members from their electorate, and it's just undemocratic and plain wrong. The current government already do not listen to the people, and they will pay for it at the ballot box in 2026. Nobody believes they are planning such changes for the benefit of the people, and it will be yet another nail in Labour's coffin.

I am disgusted at the proposal to allow transwomen to stand as women – NO, NO, NO. We need more women in government, and the equality lists are a way to achieve this. But opening the women's lists to men who say they will change their gender at some point in the future makes a nonsense of this: it's so obvious that men will say this to win votes as "women" and then row back on it. Equally appalling is the notion of not allowing the returning officers to question statements made by candidates – so they can't even comment if a man who is obviously a man claims to be standing as a woman. So much for sex equality. It's disgraceful. It is further eroding the already fragile rights of women for the benefit of men, and it must be stopped.

And as for the cost of the Senedd expansion – at a time when Wales is already on its knees, the economy reeling from the effects of Covid, the recession, and now the forced imposition of 20mph zones and the intended tourist tax – they want to spend millions on expanding an institution that is already unfit for purpose – and for what? It certainly isn't for the benefit of the people of Wales. Look at the NHS – the



appalling wait for an ambulance to turn up at all, and then the sickening waits outside hospitals to be seen by a doctor. Everybody knows the Welsh NHS is falling to pieces – THAT is where the money should go, not on this farcical power grab by the Labour party. If this proposal comes in, then it seems to me that whichever party comes to power, then they become untouchable. If a Member misbehaves, the electorate can do nothing because he wasn't directly elected. If you want to disengage people from politics, this is the way to go – if we feel our vote makes no difference, then we won't bother at all. But I guess that's exactly what Dictator Drakeford wants, because power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. There are headlines in all kinds of newspapers telling us how dangerous this is – I just hope that the Senedd Reform Committee listens to the voices of the people about this. If you don't, this will be the death of democracy in Wales.

Expanding the Senedd now is laughable, undemocratic, unjustifiable and not supported by the people of Wales. The money wasted on this would be better spent on the NHS, on struggling communities, and on turning round the desperate state of the Welsh economy. Government must listen to the people; introducing this expansion seems to me to be merely a way for the government to avoid doing exactly that.

Sarah Cook