

Senedd Cymru | Welsh Parliament

Y Pwyllgor Biliau Diwygio | Reform Bill Committee

Bil Senedd Cymru (Rhestrau Ymgeiswyr Etholiadol) | Senedd Cymru (Electoral Candidate Lists) Bill

Ymateb gan Lisa Hooton | Evidence from Lisa Hooton

What are your views on the general principles of the Bill and the need for legislation to deliver the Welsh Government's stated policy objective (to make the Senedd a more effective legislature by ensuring it is broadly representative of the gender make-up of the population)?

I don't believe that the Senedd needs to reflect the gender make-up of the population by force. Candidates should be on lists through merit, not through gender or self-declared gender. When I vote, I vote on the basis of ability to do the job, not based on gender, race, religion or other characteristics.

What are your views on the system of enforcement and potential sanctions for non-compliance proposed in the Bill?

I believe that the idea that a person who has not legally transitioned to the other gender, can self-declare without challenge completely undermines the whole idea of equality for women. This is not to say that Transgender people cannot be candidates (anyone with merit can be) but that they should not be part of a male/female quota because they self-identity as a gender. I don't agree with the quota or its implementation, therefore I don't believe in sanctions for non-compliance.

Are there any potential barriers to the implementation of the Bill's provisions? If so, what are they, and are they adequately taken into account in the Bill and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum and Regulatory Impact Assessment?

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

Yes, we could have candidates on the list because they are a female (or identity as such), rather than because the Party believes they are the best available candidates on merit. This potentially gives the electorate less effective representation.

What are your views on the Welsh Government's assessment of the financial and other impacts of the Bill?

I'm not entirely clear if this consultation is about the entire Senedd Reform Bill or just about gender quotas. However, I don't believe in any respect that the Welsh Government has assessed the impact on the electorate. Most of the views I've seen from across the political spectrum feel that this Bill is detrimental to democracy. Even those MSs voting in favour of closed lists and quotas, are only doing so to ensure the expansion goes through. They claim they will seek to change the closed lists system once it is implemented in order to have the part of the Bill they want put in place. I truly believe that turnout at Welsh elections will fall because people will feel disempowered and this has not been considered because of political ideology.

What are your views on the balance between the information contained on the face of the Bill and what is left to subordinate legislation? Are the powers for Welsh Ministers to make subordinate legislation appropriate?

Do you have any views on matters relating to the legislative competence of the Senedd including compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights?

Do you have any views on matters related to the quality of the legislation, or to the constitutional or other implications of the Bill?

Are there any other issues that you would like to raise about the Bill and the accompanying Explanatory Memorandum or any related matters?

Anything else?

Please listen to the public and the Womens' Organisations in Wales and think again about gender equality on lists, self identifying gender on lists (with no proof required) and Senedd expansion when the public have other priorities.