

SCECLB61 Individual

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 Unigolyn | Evidence from Individual

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 think in a true democracy the people should decide their representatives not the law. By which I mean that if the people want more men then women fine, or if they want more women than men fine. The law shouldn't force parties to order their lists based on one characteristic (what about people's ages, religion, sexuality, skin colour etc?). If parties want to voluntarily enact these policies fair enough, the public can still judge them on it. But forcing this through the law seems to go against a fundamental principle of democracy. We have moved in the right direction over the years in Wales (we have more women than men in the Welsh cabinet at the moment) and it seems a bit patronising to women to suggest they need the extra help. I fear this legislation will set us back and make people feel women are only in the Senedd as they had an unfair advantage.

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

The system of self declaration is open to abuse and I can already see it being lavishly mocked by opponents, which will bring the Senedd into disrepute. I also think it is wrong that parties won't have control over how they order their lists (another part of the democratic process). They may feel weaker candidates are being boosted above stronger candidates based purely on their sex, which is unfair and in the long run will undermine the Senedd. I think most people just want the best people for the job and to feel like they have control over who goes into the Senedd. I really think this change will undermine the credibility of the Senedd and could be extremely damaging to Welsh self government which I strongly support.

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?

I think the bill may not be within the powers of the Senedd, which will open it up to legal challenge. As the Llywydd has already stated.

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

As mentioned in my previous answer I think this bill could be extremely damaging for Welsh democracy and the credibility of the Senedd/Welsh self government in the eyes of the public.

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

I worry it could be a waste of taxpayers money, especially if it is not within the powers of the Senedd and ends up in the Supreme Court.

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?

From everything I have read I think this bill will end up being judged as outside the competence of the Senedd. As the Llywydd recently said. If this is the case it would be damaging to the Senedd and Welsh Government.

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?

Thank you for giving me the chance to have a say on this. I hope all feedback will be seriously considered.