

SCECLB168 Kate Williams

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 Kate Williams | Evidence from Kate Williams

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 am fully supportive of any efforts to ensure that women are represented properly and that the correct balance of the two sexes are reflected in the Senedd (about half and half). That is fair and sensible. This should also be based on merit. There is no validity in any kind of tokenism for the sake of pushing through a policy. If the best person for a post is female then that person gets the job. It is also imperative that the Senedd talks about the correct balance of the sexes. If the Senedd is looking at "gender" however then its task is more difficult since there are now over 170 genders and how it addresses that is a wider question. I would be very interested as to how the Senedd intends to accommodate for example, "two spirit gender, demigender, cuigender, bigender, faegender, pangender, etc. Is there to be a quota for each of the 170 genders which reflects the percentage of the population each gender represents? And does the Senedd wish to reflect "gender attraction" which also splits up into a sexual expression according to whichever of the 170 genders attracts one sexually? There are many questions along these lines to be considered and how the Senedd will have the legislative powers to validate all these genders as part of its make up.

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

What are you defining as a "woman?" I can see no evidence here that you are interested in whether or not someone is a woman but that the most important thing is that someone says they are irrespective of whether they are or not. So are you indicating that this process is actually one of self identification to get onto a list? And how do you determine that someone has got onto the list in bad faith by pretending to be female? Will you for instance permit men calling themselves women full time or part time i.e. men who say they are women on Wednesdays and Fridays or other

days of the week - there are a number of those. And when happens on Mondays and Thursdays when they are in men mode? There are many barriers stumbling blocks etc.

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?

That the Senedd will not have the legal capacity to enforce a Bill which looks like an attempt to allow self identification through the back door and nor should it.

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

There will be a lot of opposition from women's groups if any attempt is made to push through something that is not considerate in full of women's rights. The example of Scotland should be examined in some detail. Of course should the Senedd be wanting to try and show that it has independence from Westminster and that this is an example of how to achieve it then I doubt that women are being considered at all. Again, Scotland is an example of how not to bring in ill thought out legislation in order to satisfy an agenda.

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

The Senedd has spent 32 million (and is continuing to spend) on trying to enforce 20mph speed limits, is centred on making Wales "the most LGBT friendly country in Europe" is thinking it can make Port Talbot fully electrical, has riled up the farmers into a froth and much more. It has reduced Wales to the poorest, most underperforming part of the UK in its infrastructure, its health service and its education system. Its record is not inspiring and frankly trying to push something that seems to have no consultation with relevant groups, has no impact assessments and cannot have been costed properly is risky to say the least. From what I recall it is not unknown that past such assessments have "gone missing".

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?

No.

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

I should say that in the instance of this Bill the Senedd should be following the guidance of the Equality and Human Rights Commission and not the ECHR. In addition should be mindful of the Forstater case and the Phoenix case.

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

The quality of the legislation should be compatible with recent cases around the protection of women's rights, especially in the workplace and should be compatible with the Westminster Government's legislation. The implications of the Bill in relation to women, girls and lesbians is of the most importance. Any whiff of an attempt to undermine, distort, reduce or disturb their rights will be taken up very strongly by those affected and their supporters.

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

No there is not enough room here for that.

Anything else?

No