

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 Andy Short | Evidence from Andy Short

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 agree with the principle of making the Senedd representative of the gender make-up of the population.

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

I am content with this mechanism

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?

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

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?

I am concerned that the closed list system is a flawed system and will undermine public support of otherwise important legislation. Closed lists place too much power in party hands and I believe the electorate will judge them to be anti-democratic if they are unable to express a preference for individual candidates within the party lists.

The Senedd's own committee had strong reservations about the proposal, as does the electoral reform society and the Constitution Unit at UCL and the Expert Panel on Senedd Reform in 2017.

Pressing ahead with the closed list system will, in my view, lead to a backlash from the electorate of a similar scale and intensity to the 20mph roll out. Members of the public will lose sight of the benefits of the reform process and focus instead on the perceived democratic deficit.

Members of the public will expect to have some direct accountability for their elected members, the closed list system negates this. This is a grave error in my view.

My preferred method would be for STV although the Flexible List system of PR would also be preferable to the one currently described in the legislation.

Anything else?