

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 John Sweeney | Evidence from John Sweeney

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**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 that it is a mistake to try to force through a change by administrative action rather than by education and persuasion. This is likely to lead to resentment and further disillusion with politics. Breaking the link between voting and individual candidates is likely to add to this discontent. If the proposals go through there is a real danger that voter turnout in elections will decline even further.

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

Empowering an official to dictate to political parties in this way would be an unfortunate and potentially dangerous precedent. It undermines the function of political parties of selecting their preferred candidates on merit.

**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?**

I believe the Bill will undermine local democracy by

1. forcing parties to select on grounds other than merit
2. further alienating voters by breaking the direct link between them and candidates.

I have voted in every election of any kind since I became eligible 58 years ago. I will not vote again if this proposed system comes in.

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**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?**

**Anything else?**

I believe this legislation is taking a hammer to crack a nut. Significant strides have already been made to balance the gender quotas in the Senedd and it would be better to continue that progress by education and persuasion. This process could be augmented by the Welsh Government setting out the evidence to back up the argument behind this bill ie that a more representative gender split would be more effective rather than just fairer.