

SCECLB271 Jane Harris

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 Jane Harris | Evidence from Jane Harris

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)?

Balance always has to be a good thing however why, would I as a woman, have to state this in a public forum. Also, why are you focusing on gender rather than ability. Are men being asked to state 'I am a man'?

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

I don't agree with the enforcement and potential sanctions because I do not agree with how you will assess who the correct candidate is. Surely in the 21st century we have moved away from him and her and should focus on a person's ability and look to empower women and girls who wish to do well in public life or in a political career. The list system seems sensible because it will ensure balance but there is something missing - I don't quite know what. If the list is not appropriate it should not go ahead. Is this disempowering the electors as there seems to be an increasing central control without any discussion with the public. There should be a proper and comprehensive public consultation. Take as an example the 20mph speed limit in Wales - a new law which is unenforceable and a nonsense given that signage is very often not available, wrong or unclear. Not a good example for the Labour movement in my view. Furthermore, the people needing access to an adequate health service are using small amounts of meagre savings to access private health due to the current lack of availability to main stream NHS systems.

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?

The statement 'I am a woman' implies that women are inferior and need to always state their case. This will put at risk women who are designating themselves but have in fact got issues with gender specification.

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

The public will feel less represented not more. It will distance the electorate and may cost Labour votes.

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

Given previous Bills and enactments it would appear that the financial assessment will not be sufficient and will compromise the voting system making it resource heavy.

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?

There is not the clarity required on the face of the Bill for the electorate to be absolutely sure what is going on and this will also transfer to any further legislation that is put in place. There is a lack of understanding and over complication on the part of Welsh Government in relation to this.

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

There is a risk that the Senedd is so overwhelmed by the need to conform and produce legislation compatible with the ECHR, that it is forgetting the needs of the general public (electorate)

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

There is a lack of risk assessment, public consultation and outcome expectations.

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

There has been a lot of talk about females having equal pay, equal control, equal respect and despite all of the legislation this has not been enacted. Women require evidence that they are going to be listened to and valued before further legislation is supposedly put in place

Anything else?

Improve education and management and provide equal opportunities for all. Mysogyny and female abuse is highly evident in this culture and women need help and strong leadership to enable their voices to be heard and changes to be made. Given the lack of care from the local authorities and the NHS increasingly woman are finding themselves overwhelmed by the additional expectations and tasks they are forced to address. They are generally the care givers, the mothers, grandmothers, and quite often bread winners that are grossly underpaid and have no fall-back or support available to them. We are losing women from politics because whilst they are relevant and educated and important they have no further capacity until other issues in local government and the NHS are properly addressed with appropriate costed solutions put forward.