

SCECLB393 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)?

This is not needed. There is already a fair sex balance in the Parliament and this is heavy handed legislation that is likely to be misused.

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

Making a statement that a candidate "is a woman" is essentially meaningless. The Bill does not define any terms, and without any independent verification of the sex of the candidate the Bill will provide an advantage on the basis of self-ID rather than sex. We have seen the willingness of political organisations in Wales to accept self-ID in public life. With this principle included in the proposal it will fail to do anything to support women seeking to enter politics.

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?

In effect, the Bill will implement self-ID for men wishing to present as women and enter politics. This will not have the effect of ensuring a sex balance in the legislature and may even diminish the current sex balance.

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?

The Bill will not assist women to enter politics. There is inadequate consideration of the need to achieve fairness based on the characteristic of sex.

Further, the Bill will have the effect of compelling the speech of those engaging with it, to the extent that it requires anyone interacting with a candidate to accept their statement of identification as a woman when this is not in fact the case. Freedom of religion and belief and freedom of expression will thereby be adversely affected.

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

Self-identification as one's chosen sex is not the law in the UK. This Bill effectively introduces self-ID in an important area of public life and thus conflicts with national law.

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

It is disappointing to women to see their equality being eroded through a failure to recognise and protect their sex-based rights. A government that presents itself as progressive and yet does not protect the sex-based rights of women is not behaving in a consistent or honest manner.

Anything else?