

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 Alex Dunlop | Evidence from Alex Dunlop

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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)?**

Politics is a business of people. When people aren't directly elected they can't be as accountable to the electorate. Closed lists mean some very unpopular candidates will benefit from the work and abilities of other candidates without knowing it. It is laudable to try to get more women into politics but that must not be at the expense of the integrity of the process. You have also conflated sex and gender. Women are one of the two sexes. Gender is currently a controversial issue that does not fit squarely with the sexes. Are you trying to get more female representation or more male or females who say they're women?

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

For people to be eligible for a women's place, they must be women. That means female. This proposal introduces a legal conflation of sex and gender and introduces self-ID for gender (on a list that should be sex-specific). There are easy ways to establish a person's sex. At the moment, birth certificates work. When they can be fictionalised, it will be more difficult. So, this bill needs to clarify that candidates need to be women: female, assigned female at birth or however you want to word it. Women do exist and need to be given legal standing distinct from all men.

**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 whole document conflates sex with gender. Are you talking about female representation (point 150 talks about more effective spending in line with gender, but

it's not clear if it means sex or gender) or gender representation, which currently means anyone who wants to claim to be a woman regardless of sex? Failure to clarify basic terms means the whole policy is flawed. Legislation needs to be clearly worded to be effective.

### **Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?**

Men can take the places meant for women by claiming to be women, removing cited benefits of increasing female representation while also lowering the representation of women. Increasing the number of men who claim to be women could skew the representation of women's needs and experience of government actions. There is no benefit to women of including any men in a women's policy.

### **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?**

There is a consistent lack of clarity about sex and gender. Sex is universal, objective and binary. Gender is controversial, undefined and subjective. Good law cannot be based on the latter. If you mean the former, say so, otherwise it will be assumed that you mean the latter and women will lose more stake in government to men.

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

Have individual candidate elections with a % of women where women are a clear, objective sex category excluding all males.

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

Closed lists reduce democratic choice and seriously impact the value of candidates and the electorate, placing more power in the hands of parties. Centralising that power goes against the stated aims of the Senedd.

**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?**