

## SCECLB434 Myfanwy Evans

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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 Myfanwy Evans | Evidence from Myfanwy Evans

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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)?**

In November 2017 the report recommended 3 electoral systems, namely Mixed Member Proportional, Single transferable vote and Flexible list of which the Single Transferable was the favoured. On page 128 I note that the Closed List Proportional Representation' system was rejected. It's 'weakness' being, "No choice for voters between individual

candidates. No accountability for individual Members directly to voters." Yet this is the system now being proposed. I think this is bizarre.

The committee on Senedd Electoral Reform set up in January 2020 with representatives from Labour and Plaid Cymru agrees with the Expert Panel that The Single Transferable Vote was the best (Though it does refer to "diversity quotas for protected characteristics other than gender", without making it clear what these 'characteristics' are.)

On 30 May 2022 a report by a new group (The Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform) was published 'Reforming our Senedd: A stronger voice for the people of Wales'. The Expert Panel's favoured system of the Single Transferable Vote, endorsed by the Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform, was rejected by this latest group because it, "was an unfamiliar system in Wales and that the method of translating votes into seats would be seen as complex and difficult to explain". This is insulting to the intelligence of the people of Wales and does nothing to explain why they then, after considering the Open List, the Flexible List, and the Closed List, recommended the least representational of the three! And in addition to that an attempt is being made to have anonymised lists.

In the Reform Bill Committee (est. July 2023) report published in January, and debated in the

Senedd on 30 January, the chair, Labour's David Rees MS, makes it clear that he is unhappy

with the proposed closed list system:

"we are unanimous in our concerns about the proposed closed list electoral system . . . We believe the link between voters and the Members who represent them is paramount. We therefore urge all political parties in the Senedd to work together to ensure the electoral system in the Bill provides greater voter choice and improved accountability for future Members to their electorates."

Regarding ballot papers, on page 105 the 'Member in charge', Mick Antoniw MS, defends the

recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform. When asked by David Rees why the Bill being presented to the Senedd does not state categorically that candidates' names will appear on the ballot paper, Antoniw responds that it is being dealt with in "secondary legislation". On page 129 David Rees MS makes it clear that he believes candidates' names on

ballot papers should be stipulated in the Bill itself, not left to secondary legislation and I agree but I feel that the reforms are being manipulated in a direction that is not in the interests of openness and accountability to the people of Wales.

To hide the true nature and purpose of the exercise it must be dressed up in self-serving distractions such as 'gender equality', but with 26 out of 60 AMs being women we almost have gender equality now, without any special legislation. So why this emphasis on 'women'. For on the Senedd website, under 'Information about the Bill', we read: "Require all candidates on a party's list to state either whether they are, or are not, a woman". We are now in the realm of self-identification, and are no longer talking about biological women. I suggest this because the Welsh Government is the largest single funder to the trans activist group, Stonewall, and Labour and Plaid Senedd Members

have made their positions quite clear. And this goes some way to explaining the attempt to keep candidates' names off the ballot paper. Because men pretending to be women will not be elected. Unless they can stand anonymously.

I suspect that another reason for trying to keep candidates' names off the ballot paper is to facilitate the election of lobbyists, and members of the pressur

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

As I think the bill is deeply flawed and undemocratic sanctions are inappropriate

## **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?**

Labour's David Rees MS, makes it clear that he is unhappy with the proposed closed list system:

"we are unanimous in our concerns about the proposed closed list electoral system . . . We believe the link between voters and the Members who represent them is paramount. We therefore urge all political parties in the Senedd to work together to ensure the electoral system in the Bill provides greater voter choice and improved accountability for future Members to their electorates." I agree.

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

The reason for trying to keep candidates' names off the ballot paper is to facilitate the election of lobbyists, and members of the pressure groups that now seem to direct both Labour and Plaid Cymru. Again, these would be unlikely to get elected if voters saw their names on the ballot paper and could check on their backgrounds and associations. Seeing as so many of these 'campaigners' are alien to and ignorant of our country, if elected they would simply push their agendas. No matter how damaging those were to the interests of Wales. We already see it, with Stonewall, but also with 20mph, with the constant attacks on our farmers, and in a host of other ways; serving narrow agendas, but not Wales.

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

This bill is a waste of time and money that could be better spent in poorer parts of Wales where the real issues lie

## **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?**

David Rees MS makes it clear that he believes candidates' names on ballot papers should be stipulated in the Bill itself, not left to secondary legislation and I agree

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

Since they all under the influence of UN Agenda 30 and WHO and WEF dictates, I don't see much of a distinction other than to say that Wales appears to have no sovereignty.

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

The Expert Panel was purely to make us believe that what's now being offered is merely a 'tweaking' of the Panel's recommendations. This deception has presented us with a Bill that has nothing to recommend it, and there is nothing of it worth salvaging. It is a step backwards; an affront to common sense, a threat to democracy and should be dropped.

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

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**Anything else?**