

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 Ariel Dodson | Evidence from Ariel Dodson

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 Bill is unnecessary, discriminatory and illegal. The Senedd has already previously achieved 50/50 without the need for legislation. The Bill is non-compliant with the Equality Act 2010 and therefore discriminatory, it is not a "proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim". It discards the protected characteristic of sex to introduce gender self ID which is not legal in the UK, and will increase the barriers for women entering politics, not remove them. As equality legislation is reserved, the Bill is outwith the legislative competence of the Welsh Government, as already confirmed by the Llywydd.

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

The system is clearly open to abuse. A "gender statement" taken at "face value" and not investigated is not enforcement. This system essentially allows and encourages the 50% quota for women to be taken up by men claiming to be women. It is disrespectful to women and cannot achieve its stated purpose.

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?

This Bill cannot achieve its purpose. Whilst it might be advantageous to those women already in the Senedd, it only increases the obstacles for women wanting to stand. It is entirely possible that this Bill could lead to a future Senedd comprised entirely of men.

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

As an illegal Bill which is disadvantageous to women, it will be challenged. This can only mean enormous financial cost for the Welsh public not to mention a worldwide reputation of Wales as an anti-woman country.

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 Senedd does not have the legislative competence for this Bill. The Llywydd has already made this clear. Equalities legislation is reserved, not devolved.

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?