

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 Emma Frazer | Evidence from Emma Frazer

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)?

Striving for gender equality in the Senedd will allow women's rights to be represented fairly and broadly, without being reduced to stereotypes. It will give the women the opportunity to come together on certain issues, if required, to accurately represent the people. Plus it will provide women and women's issues with more visibility, which is very important for improving their circumstances.

According to Hanna Pitkin (1985), there are four types of representation. Descriptive representation is the type being proposed in this Bill. It means that the representatives share certain features with the people that they are representing. In this case, it would mean that the gender of the people is being accurately represented.

History shows that although they are capable of doing so, men have not sufficiently promoted women's rights, requirements, or priorities. This can be seen by the fact that gender inequality still prevails in the UK.

Rosabeth Kanter looked at how representation works, and showed that when there is a small ratio of women to men, they can be reduced to tokenism. This means that they are not able to take into account their own preferences. Instead, they are often assigned certain characteristics, regularly based on stereotypes. It also makes it harder for them to form coalitions that are able to generate change.

This Bill will make the legislation better able to represent the population. In doing so, it is more likely to improve gender equality, which has huge social and economic benefits. However, it must also make sure that women are not simply assigned the positions with less power.

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

My Master's dissertation compared the political representation of women in Brazil and Mexico. It found that Mexico's quota system was far more effective than that of Brazil, in large part due to the punishments and incentives that were implemented. In Mexico, parties can lose 50% of their public funds if they do not comply with the quotas. This has incentivised the parties to enforce the gender quotas.

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?

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

I disagree with point 179- that the Bill will not lead to monetary benefits. Although it will take time, the Bill will lead to better representation of women. This is likely to lead to policies that improve the circumstances of women. As a result, women will become more economically empowered. This will lead to women having better economic circumstances, and also the country having an improved economy.

I agree with point 177- 'Cost alone should not be an excuse for failing to invest', especially when it will bring long-term economic improvements.

I agree with point 178- The representation of women will improve the trust that girls and women have in political institutions, which leads to them taking a more 'active interest in political processes', which is certainly a positive for our democracy.

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?

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?

My Master's dissertation compared the political representation of women in Brazil and Mexico. It found that:

- There is a strong relation between the political representation of women and the economic empowerment of women.
- The rigid implementation, enforced with punishments and incentives, was important for achieving equal representation.
- It is important to make sure that the positions of power are assigned equally amongst men and women too.