

SCECLB3 - P Evidence from Aberystwyth Labour Students

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 Myfyrwyr Llafur Aberystwyth | Evidence from Aberystwyth Labour Students

Reform Bill Committee
Welsh Parliament

By email

1 April 2024

Dear members of the Reform Bill Committee

I am writing to you on behalf of Aberystwyth Labour Students regarding the voting system used in the Welsh Parliament. We have come to the conclusion that it would be better to use the transferable single vote system instead of the proposed system, which is the closed proportional list system with the D'Hondt method.

This year marks twenty-five years since devolution began in Wales. Our assembly has received additional powers, additional responsibilities, and is on the right path to becoming a full parliament for Wales. By now, it is clear that the Senedd must be reformed, that its size must be increased, and in doing so the voting system must be changed.

As you know, it is proposed in the Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill to install the closed proportional list system as the Senedd's voting system, creating 16 constituencies, each electing six members. Using such a system would mean that voters would vote for parties and all elected members would be selected in the order chosen by the parties. Voters would not be able to choose a candidate based on their policies if they stand in a party block, and Members of the Senedd elected through this system would be more accountable to their parties than to their constituents.

We believe that choosing to use this system would undermine the very democracy that reforming the Senedd could strengthen, and that the connection between the electorate and their representatives is crucial for democracy to flourish. At the same time, to ensure that everyone's voice is heard, it is essential that we use a system that can represent the views of as many people as possible.

Therefore, we believe that the single transferable vote system should be used in Senedd elections. Using this system would mean that voters would continue to vote for the people who will represent them, while, at the same time, ensuring that people can vote for the people they really prefer instead of having to vote tactically. It would strengthen democracy, bringing fairness to our elections. And, of course, the single transferable vote system would ensure that Members of the Senedd would be accountable to their constituents first and foremost.

We are not the only ones who believe this. In its report in 2017, the Expert Panel on Electoral Reform favoured the use of the single transferable vote system. Also, the Electoral Reform Society said that using the closed proportional list system would "[limit] accountability by making it harder to vote out someone not doing a good job".

Thank you for taking the time to read our letter. We hope that you will consider our position.

Yours sincerely

Celyn P. Bennett



Treasurer and Welsh Language Secretary
Aberystwyth Labour Students