

SCECLB27-P One Voice Wales

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 Un Llais Cymru | Evidence from One Voice Wales

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)?

One Voice Wales agrees with the general principles of the Bill in order to try to ensure that the Senedd is broadly representative of the gender make-up of the population. Any provisions in legislation must be supported by other measures to encourage greater participation by women in politics and to induce a change of political culture leading to more women-friendly environments. However, the Bill could be regarded as state interference in the political process and could undermine democracy more broadly in relation to the free choice of candidates by political parties. One Voice Wales notes Research by the Electoral Reform Society shows that voters do care about women's leadership in elected office. "When women are represented in elected office, even with quotas in place, the institutions are seen as more fair, more trustworthy, and ultimately more democratic.... citizens like quotas' results, because women's presence indicates that governments are working for everyone. " The results of research show that gender quotas enhance rather than diminish, democratic outcomes. When more women are in office, policy becomes more responsive to their needs. Consequently, to re-affirm, One Voice Wales agrees with the principles of the Bill.

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

If the Bill is passed, then there should be a system of enforcements and political sanctions for non-compliance proposed in the Bill.

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?

Please see 13 below.

Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?

Not being able to secure sufficient candidates. It could lead to a risk of reducing trust in women politicians who may be perceived to win seats because of the rank order/quotas and not personal merit. Against this argument one may argue that parties need to ensure that their strategy to ensure attracting more women and create a political culture which is favourable to the presence of women. The Llywydd of the Senedd has expressed the view that the provisions of the Bill would not be within the Senedd's legislative competence because it relates to the reserved matters of equal opportunities and modifies the law on reserved matters named the Equality Act 2010. If so the legislation may be challenged in the Supreme Court by the UK Government's Attorney General or the Welsh Government's Counsel General. One Voice Wales notes this predicament.

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

No views

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?

The balance between information contained on the face of the Bill and that left to subordinate legislation is 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?

No

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

No

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

Please see comments re powers of the Senedd to pass the legislation.

Anything else?

No