



Eich cyf/Your ref P 06 1193
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/10256/21

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Petitions@senedd.wales

7th October 2021

Dear Chair

I am writing in response to your letter about Petition P-06-1193: "Ask the UK Government for permission to hold a referendum on returning devolved powers".

The information supplied alongside the petition refers to the devolution referendum held in 1997. This is not the last time people in Wales expressed their democratic will in relation to devolution. In 2011, they voted by 63.49% to 36.51% in favour of full law-making powers for the National Assembly for Wales. In this year's Senedd election, voters rejected both anti-devolution and pro-independence manifestos in favour of the vision of a reformed United Kingdom to which this Welsh Government is committed.

As we have set out in [Reforming our Union: Shared Governance in the UK](#), the second edition of which was published in June, we believe the devolved nations and governments are, and will continue to be, intrinsic to the UK's constitutional arrangements for as long as they retain popular support.

Members of the committee will be aware this Welsh Government believes a strong Wales within a strong and stable Union is the best option for our citizens. As I have said repeatedly, in my view the continued existence of the United Kingdom is more at risk today than at any point in my political lifetime, and simply defending the status quo hastens the day when the United Kingdom will no longer be able to stay together.

I have called for all political leaders who are serious about making the case for the United Kingdom to be prepared to lead change so our Union can endure.

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

We are establishing an independent Commission on the Constitutional Future of Wales to lead a serious national conversation with people throughout Wales to move this important debate forward, in the regrettable absence of proper engagement from the UK Government in these issues.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark Drakeford". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

MARK DRAKEFORD