

P-06-1334 Make the Senedd More Representative of the Welsh Population - Correspondence from the Petitioner, 25.08.23.

The Senedd must reflect the diversity of the Welsh population to ensure that the laws and policies they create are fair and equitable for all. According to the Welsh Government's statistics, 5.2% of Wales is of ethnic minority background, however, this number has not reflected in the composition of the Senedd in the past. Only 43% of those elected to the Senedd are women which is an improvement from the previous elections when the 50% split was not remotely approached. However, there is still work to be done to increase the representation of other underrepresented groups. It is hard to believe that the first ethnic minority female member of Senedd was elected in 2021. There are only 3 members who are from an ethnic minority background with little to no representation of those with a visible disability. This adversely affects the lives of minority groups within Wales as their voices are not being heard. We need the representation of all populations in Wales as only people with experience can make a positive difference.

The Senedd plays a significant role in shaping the lives of Welsh citizens, and it is important that the members of the Senedd reflect the diversity of the people they represent. Diversity encompasses not only race and ethnicity, but also gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. When a diverse group of people work together, they bring a wider range of experiences and perspectives to the table, leading to more creative and innovative solutions to problems. Moreover, a diverse Senedd can lead to better representation of marginalized communities, who often face discrimination and exclusion in society. Members of marginalized communities are better equipped to understand the unique challenges and barriers faced by their communities and can advocate for policies that address their needs. Diversity in the Senedd can also promote public trust and confidence in government. When the Senedd reflects the diversity of the population it serves, people feel more represented and heard. This can lead to increased participation in the democratic process and a sense of ownership over the decisions made by the government.

Despite the importance of diversity in the Senedd, achieving it can be challenging. Structural barriers such as unconscious bias and discrimination can prevent underrepresented groups from running for office and being elected. Moreover, the political process itself can be exclusionary, with a focus on political experience and access to resources, which can disadvantage those from underprivileged backgrounds.

There are several steps that can be taken to increase diversity in the Senedd. Firstly, political parties should prioritize diversity when selecting candidates for elections. This can be achieved by actively seeking out candidates from underrepresented groups and providing them with support and training to enable them to stand for election. The Senedd should provide support and funding for underrepresented groups to enable them to stand for election. This could include training and mentoring programs to help individuals develop the skills and knowledge needed to run for office. Likewise, the Senedd should promote diversity through its outreach and engagement activities. This could include engaging with underrepresented communities to understand their needs and concerns and working to address these issues through policies and legislation.

In conclusion, diversity in the Senedd is crucial for creating fair and equitable policies and governance. A diverse group of policymakers can bring different perspectives to the table and ensure that the needs of all communities are represented. It is important as it ensures that the views and experiences of different communities are represented. While progress has been made in increasing the representation of women, more needs to be done to increase the representation of other underrepresented groups. However, achieving diversity can be challenging, and structural barriers must be addressed to ensure that all voices are heard. It is imperative that efforts are made to increase diversity in the Senedd to ensure that it is truly representative of the Welsh population it serves.