Cyflwynwyd yr ymateb hwn i [ymgynghoriad y Pwyllgor Biliau Diwygio](#) ar [Fil Senedd Cymru (Aelodau ac Etholiadau)](#).

This response was submitted to the [Reform Bill Committee consultation](#) on the [Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill](#).

SCME301 Ymateb gan: | Response from: Charlie Pearcy

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Senedd Cymru (Members and Elections) Bill - Consultation - Submission by Charlie Pearcy

I am not keen on Closed Party List systems, preferring instead Open Party List systems so that electors can vote for an individual candidate, and not just for a party. However, I do believe Party List systems are an improvement on First Past the Post (FPTP), as more voters will be represented by someone that they helped elect. Incidentally, FPTP is effectively a Closed Party List system where each party puts forward a list of one candidate; so voters who have decided which party they want to support have to accept that party's choice of candidate (or vote for a different party).

The thing that I like about the Senedd's current voting system (the Additional Member System, or AMS) is that it allows people to give a personal vote to a candidate from one party, and a party vote to a different party. This is a feature that I took advantage of in 2016, when I voted for a personal friend who stood for a party whose policies I strongly oppose. I can see three ways in which the Senedd's version of AMS could be improved:

(1) replacing X-voting with preference voting in the constituencies. This would remove the need for some people to vote tactically to have an effective vote. It would also mean that in seats where the current representative has received less than half of the votes cast an increased share of voters would be represented by someone that they helped to elect;

(2) replace the closed lists with open lists, so that people can vote for their preferred candidate from their preferred party;

(3) increase the proportion of party list seats so that seats won more accurately represents votes cast than at present.

I believe that multi-member constituencies have several advantages over single member ones. I accept that single member constituencies are better for the elected representatives. They know that they represent every elector in the constituency, irrespective of whether or how they voted. In a multi-member constituency the representative will not know which electors make up the portion of voters that elected them. Also, being smaller, a single member constituency is easier to represent than a multi-member one. (My wife was a councillor in a two-member electoral division. Helping her with leaflet delivery and canvassing was certainly a lot easier than it would have been if her division had been merged with a neighbouring one to create a 5-member or 6-member division.)

However, I believe that voting systems should put the interests of voters before the interests of the elected representatives.

With multi-member constituencies, a larger proportion of the electorate will be able to identify with a representative that they helped to elect. Electors would have a choice of who to contact. On a political issue they could contact the representative whose views most closely match their own. On a non-political issue they could contact the representative with the greatest expertise or experience of that particular issue. Constituents would be able to contact other representatives if, for example, one representative is temporarily unavailable due to ill health, or is ignoring their constituents' requests for help, or becomes less available because they have been promoted to a ministerial post.

Personally, I would prefer to see the Senedd elected using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system of proportional representation in multi-member constituencies. STV gives voters a real choice, not only between parties, but also between candidates of the same party. So with STV voters can get rid of an unwanted representative

without having to vote for a different party. With STV it is a party's voters, not the party itself, who decide which candidates get elected.