

## SCECLB29- P Welsh Labour

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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 Llafur Cymru | Evidence from Welsh Labour

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### **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)?**

Welsh Labour welcomes the opportunity to provide evidence to this consultation. The Party's values are underpinned by a commitment to a more just society and a more open democracy and, accordingly, aiming to improve diversity at all levels of government is a crucial part of the work we do. Our 2021 Senedd manifesto included a commitment to build on the work of the Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform and to 'develop proposals to improve the representation of the people of Wales in their Parliament'. Welsh Government ministers are taking forward our policies as part of their work in government.

We support the general principles of the Bill: a Senedd that is truly representative of Wales is a more effective one. We are committed to a Senedd that is more representative of the people that it serves, and that includes supporting provisions that are designed to maximise the chances of achieving a Senedd comprised of at least 50% women. We also support the proposals to encourage political parties to publish diversity and inclusion strategies, thus improving transparency.

Welsh Labour is committed to more positive action to encourage and enable more people with protected characteristics to come forward as potential candidates within the confines of the law, and to play our part in ensuring that there is more diversity at all levels of government.

To this end, we have already put a number of strategies in place internally to help us in our aim to positively influence our selection processes in order to attract a more diverse set of elected representatives. For instance, we already use gender quotas for our regional lists, and have devised support schemes and training opportunities to encourage a more diverse pool of candidates in elections at all levels, such as our successful Future Candidates Programme. More broadly, the Labour Party has long pioneered progress on better representation for women in public life.

The work that Welsh Labour has undertaken has seen us lead the way on gender equality among our Senedd representatives, with women making up more than half of our Senedd members. We

note that the percentage of Welsh Labour MSs who are women greatly exceeds that of other political parties in Wales.

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

We support the principle of a system of enforcement and potential sanctions for parties that fail to reach the minimum threshold. It is crucial that there are effective sanctioning mechanisms in place in order to encourage compliance.

Welsh Labour already undertakes action within our internal processes to encourage compliance with measures to improve diversity in our selection processes.

### **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?**

### **Are any unintended consequences likely to arise from the Bill?**

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

Wales is the most under-represented country in the UK, and the proposals form part of a once-in-a-generation opportunity to strengthen our democracy. There are, of course, costs associated with reforming the Senedd, but they represent the equivalent of a very small amount of Wales' total budget every year.

### **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?**

### **Do you have any views on matters relating to the legislative competence of the Senedd including compatibility with the European Convention on Human Rights?**

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

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

### **Anything else?**