

P-05-887 Stop regional AMs elected to represent specific parties from defecting

This petition was submitted by Ifan Morgan Jones having collected a total of 1,301 signatures.

Text of Petition

The Welsh Assembly now has legal power over its own electoral system. We call on the National Assembly for Wales to stop Members on the regional list from switching political parties. When voting on the regional list, voters choose political parties rather than individuals. Under the present rules, however, Members elected on the regional list can voluntarily switch parties.

During previous Assembly terms, this was of little consequence, but in the last three years, multiple Assembly Members have made a mockery of the institution by declaring themselves independent or switching parties. One Assembly Member has now represented three different political parties during the lifetime of the Assembly term, and another declared herself independent within days of being inaugurated as an AM. There is no democratic mandate for this. It means that a third of the Senedd has little accountability to the electorate, who did not vote for them but voted for the party they originally represented. The rules should be changed so that, if an Assembly Member on the list voluntarily decides to change his or her political affiliation, he or she vacates their seat as an AM and the next candidate for that political party on the regional list takes his or her place. In order to prevent abuse of the system, any candidate involuntarily expelled from their group should be able to remain as an independent AM but should not be allowed to join another party.

This petition notes with regret that this change may further cement the perception that regional AMs are 'second class citizens' within the Assembly. However, we feel that this problem is inherent to the two-tier additional member system and is, in this case, the lesser of two evils compared with the way the current rules allow for the electoral process to be undermined.

This petition suggests that the Welsh Parliament and Elections (Wales) Bill be amended to include the changes mentioned above.

Additional Information

Assembly Constituency and Region

- Ceredigion
- Mid and West Wales