



Eich cyf/Your ref P-06-1305
Ein cyf/Our ref FM -/00586/22

Jack Sargeant MS
Chair
Petitions Committee
Senedd Cymru
Cardiff Bay
CF99 1SN
petitions@senedd.wales

17th November 2022

Dear Jack,

I am writing in response to your letter of 12 October about a petition from Gareth John Phillips opposed to increasing the number of Senedd Members.

As you are aware, the Senedd voted in favour of taking forward the recommendations of the Special Purpose Committee on Senedd Reform report [Reforming our Senedd: A stronger voice for the people of Wales](#) in June, by the necessary two-thirds majority.

This report includes a recommendation that the Senedd should have 96 Members to reflect the way the role and responsibilities of the Senedd has grown since it was first established in 1999.

The Richard Commission (2004); the McAllister report (2017) and subsequently the Committee on Senedd Electoral Reform (2020), have all concluded that there is clear and compelling evidence that the Senedd must increase in size to fulfil its responsibilities effectively and in the best interests of the people of Wales.

The Senedd is currently the smallest of all the devolved legislatures in the UK and has remained the same size since the establishment of the National Assembly in 1999, despite assuming extra law-making and tax-raising powers. In addition, when the UK left the EU, Wales lost its MEPs and there are proposals for Wales to see a cut in the number of MPs from 40 to 32 under current boundary review plans.

The scrutiny role of the legislature is vital for a healthy democracy. It is essential that the Senedd has appropriate capacity to carry out its role in holding the government to account.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1SN

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Mark.Drakeford@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Mark.Drakeford@gov.wales

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.

Investing in our democracy has a cost attached to it. The Welsh Government will develop and publish detailed cost estimates to accompany Senedd Reform legislation. Elected Members and the public will have an opportunity to consider these costs when they are published as part of the Bill's scrutiny process.

The Wales Act 2017 provided power to the Senedd to change its size, without being subject to a referendum. There are many precedents for changes to the number of elected members being made without referendums, including the boundary review changes for the UK Parliament which will see a reduction in the number of MPs that Wales returns to Westminster from 40 to 32.

Following the vote in the Senedd in June, the Welsh Government has begun work on a Senedd Reform Bill, which will be introduced to the Senedd in due course. This will be subject to rigorous debate and scrutiny in the Senedd.

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