



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

Martin Whitfield MSP
Convener
Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee
c/o Clerk to the Committee

Graham Simpson MSP
5 November 2025

Dear Mr Whitfield,

Scottish Parliament (Recall and Removal of Members) Bill

I am writing to thank your Committee for its Stage 1 report on my Bill on the recall and removal of members of the Scottish Parliament. I have read all of the recommendations and very much welcome the thorough and detailed scrutiny the Committee has undertaken.

Of course, I am most pleased by the recommendation that the Parliament agrees the general principles of the Bill at stage 1. I feel passionately that the democratic accountability of MSPs after they are elected must improve, and as a result have dedicated years to working on this Bill. I am very encouraged that committee members share this commitment to the recall process, and I very much hope the Bill can receive cross-party support when it progresses to being debated by the whole parliament next week. The report has just been published, and I need time to give careful consideration to each and every one of the Committee's findings, prioritising those where amendments to the Bill are being recommended.

I was particularly keen to see the recommendations made by the Committee on my approach to the recall of regional MSPs in the Bill. As I acknowledged when I gave evidence before the Committee, this has been a very challenging issue to navigate. Establishing a workable and affordable system for the recall of regional MSPs is incredibly challenging, as is ensuring that MSPs elected as constituency MSPs are treated as equitably as possible in the recall process. In response to the recommendations on the workability and cost of the regional poll process, I have been considering how to address these, including monitoring developments in Wales such as the introduction of the Member Accountability and Elections Bill earlier this week.

I can confirm I am considering amending the Bill to remove the two-stage process for the removal of regional MSPs. Moving to a process where the public is asked once whether to retain the MSP, as is the case in the Welsh Government's Bill, would make the process simpler for the public as well as saving the taxpayer significant sums.

I am also actively considering how, in making this change, I can continue to treat regional and constituency MSPs as equitably as possible, whilst acknowledging as the Committee does in its report that the routes by which constituency and regional MSPs are elected are different, and so it is understandable that the routes by which they can be removed will also be different.

Specifically, I am considering whether it is viable to amend the Bill in relation to constituency MSPs so that when an MSP is removed in a recall process that individual would be prevented from running in the by-election generated by the vacancy. I am yet to decide whether to explore amending the bill in this way but would welcome the views of members during the Stage 1 debate on this proposal.

Thank you again to your Committee, and to all those who took the time to share their valuable expertise with you. I look forward to debating these matters with you in more detail during the Stage 1 debate next Thursday afternoon. I then very much hope we can progress to the amendment stages this year to ensure ample time for this important bill to proceed through Parliament before the election.

Yours sincerely,

Graham Simpson MSP