

Written submission from Fergus Ewing MSP

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Consultation on Elected Conveners 2024

Thanks for this invitation to submit views. I support their being elected Convenors of Committees. The reason I believe this should be the case is to strengthen the role of Parliament, and to bring about the outcome which I believe is likely, that the successful candidates becoming Convenors would require to gain broad support from across the chamber.

This would I believe be likely to lead to the election of the most experienced and qualified candidates. This is a matter of opinion, and I appreciate that I am postulating one scenario. The question arises about whether this system should be superimposed on the De Honte method of determining the number of Convenors for each party.

If this were to be dispensed with, there is a danger that the parties of Government could use their numerical majority in order to select only candidates from the parties of Government. So I suggest it be retained but the selection of conenor should be by MSPs as a whole.

Finally I believe that the role of conenor is an onerous one. I have not myself served as a conenor. But I am well aware that those who make the best fist of it put a very very large amount of effort into it and rightly so.

Therefore I do believe that consideration be given to salaried payments for Convenors perhaps equivalent to that of a junior minister or DPO. I appreciate this may be controversial and the arguments against are cost and risks of attracting candidates whose interested may be motivated by money not commitment.

But I see that this system has worked and I believe worked well in Westminster.