



Scottish Independence Referendum Bill

Bill Number: SP Bill 25
Introduced on: 21 March 2013
Introduced by: Nicola Sturgeon
Passed: 14 November 2013
Royal Assent: 17 December 2013

[2013 asp 14](#)

Passage of the Bill

The [Scottish Independence Referendum Bill](#) (SP Bill 25) was introduced by Nicola Sturgeon, the Deputy First Minister, on 21 March 2013.

The remit of the [Referendum \(Scotland\) Bill Committee](#), which had been agreed by the Parliament on 23 October 2012, meant it would be designated as the lead committee for the Bill.

The Committee issued a general call for written evidence on [21 March 2013](#). The Committee held oral evidence sessions on [28 March](#), [9 May](#), [16 May](#), [23 May](#), [30 May](#) and [13 June 2013](#) and discussed its draft Stage 1 report in private on 27 June and 15 August 2013.

The Bill was also considered by the Finance Committee on [29 May 2013](#) and by the Subordinate Legislation Committee on [16 April 2013](#) and [14 May 2013](#) and by its successor committee, the Delegated Powers and Law Reform, on [3 September 2013](#).

The Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee published its [Stage 1 report](#) on 26 August 2013.

The Stage 1 debate by the Parliament was held on [12 September 2013](#).

The Bill was considered at Stage 2 by the Committee on [3 October](#) and [10 October 2013](#) and the [Bill as amended at Stage 2](#) was published on 11 October 2013.

The Stage 3 debate took place, and the [Bill as amended was passed](#), on [14 November 2013](#).

Royal Assent was received on 17 December 2013.

Purpose and objectives of the Bill

The main purpose of the Bill was to set the date of and the rules for holding the referendum on Scotland's independence. The Bill also contained the wording of the referendum question.

The franchise for the Referendum had already been established by the passing of the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill.

Provisions of the Bill

The Bill established the technical details of the conduct of the Scottish Independence Referendum, including the campaign rules, including spending limits and reporting, also the roles of the Electoral Commission and the Chief Counting Officer.

The Bill's provisions were based on the provisions for running a referendum set out in the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000 (PPERA).

Parliamentary consideration

There were a number of amendments made at Stage 2. Following calls by election officials, to bring the legislation into line with other elections, a number of technical amendments were moved by the Scottish Government and individual committee members.

These included moving official mark on ballot paper to front and allowing children of service personnel to make their own service declaration in order to be able to register and vote.

These amendments were agreed without division, in addition, a number of Government amendments, which the Electoral Commission had concerns about, were agreed after divisions with the two Labour members of the Committee abstaining.

The Government put forward a number of minor and technical amendments at Stage 3.

The Government also lodged amendments in response to the Electoral Commission's concerns about its various amendments, previously agreed on division at Stage 2, including ones relating to postal ballots and emergency proxy applications.

There was also a Government amendment which allowed the Scottish Parliament to publish its Official Report on the first day of the purdah period prior to the Referendum