Call for evidence on the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill

The Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee has been established to consider the legislation relating to the forthcoming referendum on independence.

The Committee is seeking views on the general principles of the Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill. A copy of the Bill and accompanying Policy Memorandum and Explanatory Notes can be found at:

Scottish Independence Referendum (Franchise) Bill

The Bill was introduced to the Parliament on 11 March 2013. The Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee is likely to be designated as the lead committee for Stage 1 consideration of the Bill.

Aims of the Bill

The Bill aims to set out who is entitled to vote in the referendum. In particular, it:

- Gives Electoral Registration Officers a power – and a duty – to collect the information necessary to register eligible under-16s who will be 16 or over by the date of the referendum, but who will not appear on the register of local government electors. Electoral Registration Officers will be asked to collect this information at the same time as they conduct the next annual household canvass.
- Requires each Electoral Registration Officer to collate this additional information into a Register of Young Voters for his or her area, which will contain the details of young people who will be at least 16 at the time of the referendum but will not appear on the local government register.
- Gives Electoral Registration Officers a power and a duty to maintain the Register of Young Voters under rolling registration (that is, as any additional eligible young people register to vote in the referendum after the canvass).
- Prohibits Electoral Registration Officers from publishing the Register of Young Voters, and direct that they provide the material it contains only to a prescribed, limited group of people.

Further details on the Bill are contained in the Policy Memorandum and Explanatory Notes.

Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee consideration

The Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee has already taken pre-Stage 1 evidence on the subject matter of the Bill and expects to consider written submissions and to take evidence on the Bill from mid March until mid April, before reporting on the Bill’s general principles around the beginning of May 2013.

Written evidence should be submitted, if possible, by Friday 22 March 2013 (to inform the Committee’s oral evidence session with the Deputy First Minister on Thursday 28 March). For those unable to meet this deadline, written evidence may
also be submitted up to Friday 12 April 2013, and the Committee will still endeavour to take such evidence into account in its report.

**How to submit written evidence**

Written evidence should normally not exceed six pages in length and should, if possible, be submitted electronically (preferably in MS Word format) to the Committee clerks at referendum.committee@scottish.parliament.uk. It may also be posted to Clerk to the Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee, Room T2.60, Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh EH99 1SP.

Before submitting evidence please read the Parliament’s policy on the treatment of written evidence. Any queries should be directed to the Committee clerks, whose details are available on the Committee’s web-page.

**Contact**

Any queries about written submissions should be addressed in the first instance to the Referendum (Scotland) Bill Committee clerking team at the above email address or (0131) 348 5417.