Written evidence submitted by Gruffydd Meredith (DWB 14)

Proposals for the forthcoming Wales Bill to include an option for new Welsh Assembly members to swear an oath or make an affirmation to the people of Wales instead of to a monarchy and/or crown.

Annwyl bawb/Dear all at the Welsh Affairs Committee,

I would like to propose that the following is included in the forthcoming Wales Bill and thank you in advance for your consideration:

I strongly believe that there is a need for and urge you to ensure that there is an equal option in the forthcoming Wales bill that would allow new Welsh Assembly members to swear an oath or make an affirmation to the people of Wales instead of to a monarchy and/or crown. It should also remain an option for new Welsh Assembly members to swear an oath or to make the affirmation to a monarchy if they so wished. This would provide a fairer and much needed choice for newly elected representatives and would be a better reflection of the broad scope of views in society.

There is no requirement for members of the Northern Ireland Assembly to take any oath or affirmation - Northern Ireland Assembly members are instead required to take a Pledge of Office. There is no reason, historically, politically or otherwise why Wales shouldn’t have parity and a similar choice to that seen in the Northern Ireland Assembly or indeed in any other legislator. This rational equal option for Wales is crucial for Welsh political plurality and fairness.

The honourable member for Cardiff west, Mr Kevin Brennan has also agreed to introduce a petition regarding this matter to the House of Commons and an online petition is also going to be published in the near future.

I would like to therefore propose that the necessary amendments are made to the Draft Wales bill and any other present or future legislation and its draft or drafts which governs the taking of oaths and the making of the affirmation. This will ensure that new Welsh Assembly members have the option to swear an oath or make an affirmation to the people of Wales rather than to a monarchy and/or crown.

Many thanks for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Gruffydd Meredith

22 November 2015