Written submission from Miss Lucy Piggott (WHC0042)

I am a PhD student researching the underrepresentation of women leaders within English sports organisations. This means that there are many alignments with the work I am doing, the work of 50:50 Parliament and this inquiry.

Please see below for some comments on the three key areas outlined within the Call for written submissions

1. What should the Government, political parties, the House of Commons and the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority be doing now to ensure better female representation in the House of Commons in 2020 and beyond?

   - Ensure that recruitment processes are fair and gender neutral (e.g. ensure old boys’ clubs and other male networks are not influencing the recruitment process).
   - Identify future woman MPs and offer support and training.
   - Research and identify which universities MPs typically come from and the courses they take and encourage these universities and courses to give more real-world training for female students on a career in politics (e.g. research shows that men tend to network a lot more than women so develop networking skills).
   - Set targets with dates for female representation and outline an action plan to achieve these targets e.g. 40% female representation by 2018.
   - Advertise and educate on the benefits of having more women in parliament e.g. a greater awareness of the public’s needs; the consideration of a more expansive set of issues and interests; more informed decision-making through the insight created by more diverse talents, skills, perspectives and experiences; and enhanced legitimacy due to the public feeling better represented by parliament.

2. What are the political parties doing to ensure that female representation will increase at the next general election given the impact that the 2018 Boundary Commission Review could have?

   I do not have the insight to comment.

3. What further changes are needed to improve retention of women MPs?

   - The culture of the House of Commons needs to be welcoming and supportive to female MPs. This can include language used, dress codes, addressing childcare needs, not holding debates at unsociable hours for mothers and challenging the use of sexist humour.
   - Women’s leadership development programmes help to continue to develop women MPs and increase their confidence and competence in parliament.
   - Mentoring schemes.
I hope that you find these comments helpful. Please do not hesitate to get in touch if you would like to discuss any of my points further.

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