



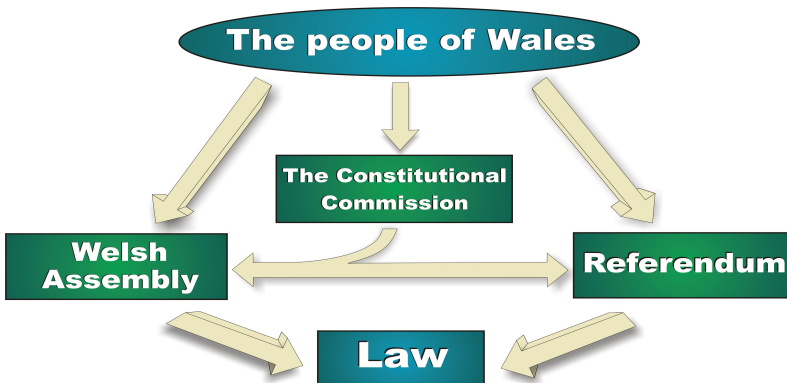
Campaign For
Democracy

A short guide.

campaignfordemocracy.org.uk

Our aim is to transfer power from the politicians in Cardiff to the people of Wales. The politicians won't want this so we put pressure on them by building blocks of votes in Assembly and Parliamentary constituencies and offering them to candidates. Whichever party supports the campaign gets the votes, but if they all ignore us we use that block of votes to remove sitting Assembly members. That sends a clear message to Cardiff. The people of Wales should be the sovereign power in Wales. It should be for us to decide what type of political system we have, and Assembly Members whose parties won't support the campaign will lose their jobs.

We aim to add two new processes to our political system that will allow people of all viewpoints to work together for the common good. The first is a reform process that allows people to reform our political system and the *influences* on the system. To be genuinely open it must be accessible to all and so it must allow people to initiate binding referendums on political reform, without having to obtain the consent of politicians or bureaucrats. The introduction of this process would inevitably lead to the use of the system for all legislation and so an I & R system (the Initiative and Referendum system) based on the Swiss model was added to the campaign's demand. The Swiss system forces politicians to work together for the good of the country and has forced the Swiss political parties to form a coalition government that has lasted for over fifty years.



The most important part of our system is the reform process, because the system we have simply does not work. The most dramatic example of this failure is a huge national debt that is still increasing, yet Britain is an oil producing nation. This debt is entirely due to failures in our political system, failures in the control of spending and failures in bank regulation but it is not enough to reform politics. We must be able to challenge those

who influence our politicians. Big business and the unions pay for politics in Britain and we know that newspaper owners and media corporations also have influence. Our elected representatives should be answerable to the people of Wales and Britain, and no one else. Our reform process will allow you to turn this ideal into reality.

Both parts of our system will require the supporters of a referendum proposal to collect a set number of signatures from registered voters to prove that there is public support for the proposal before it can go to referendum. In Switzerland proposals must get 100,000 signatures before a vote is held. The Swiss electorate is larger than the Welsh electorate so in Wales we suggest that the number of signatures needed should be between thirty and forty thousand.

The problem with proposals for political reform is that the subject isn't very exciting. Proposals could also be quite technical and these things could make it difficult to get a referendum on a proposal if the signature barrier is set too high. The other side of that problem is that if this barrier is set too low the system will be swamped with impractical proposals. The answer to this problem is to set the signature barrier low, perhaps around ten thousand, but have a filter to take out any unrealistic initiatives.

This filter will be a commission of twelve people selected by lot that will give us a truly independent commission, but they're not going to be busy. Few poor proposals will get the required number of signatures and good proposals will be adopted without going to the commission. If you have a reform proposal you don't start by collecting signatures, you take your proposal to your elected representatives. If they reject good proposals and force people to go to the effort and expense of collecting signatures and running referendums unnecessarily it will cost them votes at elections. This also applies to proposals for ordinary legislation because voters will punish parties that refuse to support good initiatives. This will make ordinary concepts of government and opposition pointless and this is why the Swiss government has been a coalition of the four main parties for over fifty years.

An example of a reform you might want also comes from Switzerland. Swiss MPs only meet for three weeks in every three months. They've all got proper jobs and this could solve a problem that might stop many good people going into politics. People who get elected in Wales serve for five years but it is recognised that anyone who has a skill or profession will have lost much of that knowledge after two years away from that work. This means that many people who could make a valuable contribution to

the Welsh Assembly won't put themselves forward to be AMs. Would a move to the Swiss system bring people into the Assembly who have the talent and experience Wales needs? This is not something we campaign for, but it's something you could have using our reform process.

The political parties in Wales have known about the campaign for years and whilst many party members like our ideas it is too big a step for politicians to take without external pressure being applied. We aim to create that pressure and make these ideas the subject of public debate. To do this we need to get the campaign publicity and the easiest way to make an impact is to remove sitting Assembly members. We are asking our supporters to vote Liberal Democrat in Montgomeryshire, remove the Conservative AM Russell George, and get the campaign the publicity it needs to grow. Our team has already put in months of work in the constituency and this is now a realistic prospect.

Politics can be defined as the pursuit of power, but to understand why our system is fundamentally wrong we need to extend that definition. Politics is the pursuit of power over other people. Expressed in this way it is obvious that politics is essentially immoral. No one should be pursuing power over others. We will give you the authority you need to take our country beyond politics. Politics divides us. Politics is a poison in our world. The antidote is pluralism and pluralism is what CfD is all about. Pluralists recognise that people from every part of society have something to contribute. We campaign for systems in which everyone can contribute whatever it is they have to offer.

What is also required is an equality of power between people, a concept that is at the heart of the campaign. Where this exists none can be excluded, or alienated, and this is essential both in good decision making and for the creation of a successful society. JK Rowling made a billion pounds out of the Harry Potter books but that's a form of inequality we're not too bothered about, because we chose to give her the money. Power is something very different. An equality of power is of fundamental importance in creating a stable and successful society that can move beyond politics, and our systems create that form of equality.

If you would like to know more about the campaign or would like to join us please visit our website, campaignfordemocracy.org.uk