



Liberal Democrats
8-10 Great George Street
London
SW1P 3AE

Electoral Reform Society
3 London Bridge Street
London
SE1 9SG

10 December 2019

Dear Darren,

Thank you very much for your letter about proportional representation.

Political reform has always been a priority for the Liberal Democrats, whether in government or out of it.

British politics clearly isn't working for people. The outdated first-past-the-post voting system has allowed the Conservative and Labour parties to maintain their grip on the vast majority of seats in Westminster, even as they have been led to the extremes and shifted far from the views of the vast majority of British people.

In hundreds of safe seats, the outcome is a foregone conclusion. MPs need only keep their parties and donors happy, not their constituents. People are taken for granted by politicians and parties, unable to properly hold their representatives to account. In other seats, many people are forced to vote tactically: against their least favoured candidate instead of for their most favoured one.

This is hugely damaging for our democracy. It leaves millions of people feeling powerless and excluded; robbed of their rightful say over how our country is run.

That's why the Liberal Democrats have a long-standing commitment – included once again in our manifesto – to replace first-past-the-post with proportional representation through the Single Transferable Vote.

This would allow voters to rank their preferred candidate number one, without the risk of helping the worst one sneak in. It would force politicians and parties to compete for every vote, in every part of the country. And it would end the scandal of minority rule – exemplified by the 2015 general election, when the Conservatives won a majority with just 37% of the vote.

Electoral reform is not the only part of our plan to mend our broken politics. We are also campaigning for an end to the ban on 16- and 17-year olds from voting; reform of the House of Lords; and a cap on donations to political parties.

The Liberal Democrats' goal is to build a brighter future, with properly-funded schools and hospitals, free childcare, affordable housing, safe communities and clean air – and it can only be achieved if governments are responsive to all the people, not just a few swing-voters in a handful of marginal seats or a tiny cabal of big-money donors.

That is why the Liberal Democrats will remain committed to proportional representation and wider political reform, no matter the result of this election.

With a better electoral system and more democratic institutions, politicians and parties will have to be more focused on the things that really matter to people, and we'll have better public services and a fairer society as a result.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rhiannon Leaman". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rhiannon Leaman
(Office of Jo Swinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrats)