

Green Party calls on Labour leadership candidates to support electoral reform



Green Party

3 April 2020

The co-leaders of the Green Party [have written to the Labour leadership candidates](#) to offer to work together during the coronavirus crisis and to call on them to back electoral reform. [1]

Ahead of Labour's leadership election result being announced on Saturday [4 April], Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley have written to each of the candidates outlining the importance of cooperation during the current crisis.

The letter also calls on whoever is announced as Labour leader to embrace proportional representation in order to strengthen our democracy and build a more resilient politics for the future.

Berry said: "The coronavirus crisis has shown just how vital it is that politicians work together and a fairer voting system which encourages more collaboration would make sure this kind of cooperation happens across the board.

"First past the post seriously hinders the ability of parties to work together. We cannot continue to allow our democracy to be warped by a system where votes do not match who gets elected.

"So I urge the new leader of Labour to do the right thing, by backing a fairer proportional representation system and strengthening our democracy."

Modernising the system will remove hundreds of safe seats across the UK, and incentivise parties to be more representative in their choice of candidates and, crucially, policies.

Voters stand to gain from this no matter which party they support, as research from the University of Michigan shows countries using proportional representation outperform those using first past the post on measures of income inequality, quality of life, environmental protections, education and health. [2]

Berry outlined further benefits for voters, including that proportional representation can avoid situations where extreme views can be bulldozed

through without proper scrutiny, because proportional representation creates a need for compromise and gives space to smaller voices.

Proportional representation offers stability from policy lurch, where a new Government spends time undoing the work of the previous party, as well as lessening the likelihood of quick-fix solutions to win temporary public support.

The letter states: "In Labour, as in our party, the majority of members support a proportional voting system [3], and no other socialist or social democratic party in any major developed country still supports first past the post.

"Whichever one of you is elected, we offer our support in the collegiate spirit these times deserve, and we would like to meet with you virtually as soon as you are able, to discuss both the immediate crisis and how we build a better politics for the future."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/Letter-Labour-leadership-2020-04-02-SBJB.pdf>

2

Research cited is from University of Michigan lecturer Salomon Orellana's Electoral Systems and Governance: How Diversity Can Improve Policy-Making

3

Three-quarters of Labour members want party to back proportional representation, Independent, 17 Dec 2019

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/labour-party-proportional-representation-corbys-leader-pollsa9249196.html>

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