

Is Labour interested in democracy?

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The [Guardian](#) reported this yesterday:

Ministers are changing the voting system for mayoral elections in a move likely to make it harder for Reform politicians to take big regions like Lincolnshire and Hull as they did this year.

They note:

The move is likely to please Labour MPs and local authorities after frustration over losses in two recent contests where Andrea Jenkyns, a Reform mayor, was elected on 42% of the vote in Lincolnshire, while Luke Campbell, the Reform mayor in Hull and East Yorkshire, got 35%.

In another part of the legislation, mayors will now be elected under a preferential system, rather than first-past-the-post, a change designed to make sure candidates have broader support.

The move also pleases me. That is because it recognises a simple fact, which is that under first-past-the-post electoral systems, the majority of people in any constituency, whatever the election is, will not in any way be represented by the person who is elected, and will therefore feel alienated by the process of democracy that has gone on. This, of course, is the sentiment that the Labour MPs who are pleased about this move have now discovered.

The problem is that those very same MPs appear not to have realised that people in the country at large have exactly the same sentiment about having sent a Labour majority to the House of Commons when that supposed the majority lacked any electoral support to provide it with the authority that it claims to have to undertake changes so detrimental to the well-being of so many people in this country.

If Labour really has understood that electing mayors and police commissioners on a first-past-the-post system is wrong because a single office holder for a constituency should not be returned on that basis, then there are two things that it should do.

First of all, it should require that every election be undertaken based on proportional representation.

Secondly, it should require that MPs, councillors and others who hold elected office must represent multi-member constituencies (which is, of course, completely commonplace in local council elections) so that the likelihood of there being an elected member who might represent the opinions of a person in the community is dramatically increased.

If Labour believed in democracy, they would do this.

If they don't, we will get the most unambiguous possible indication that they have no interest in the democratic process at all, which I fear is the case.

Taking further action

If you want to write a letter to your MP on the issues raised in this blog post, there is a ChatGPT prompt to assist you in doing so, with full instructions, [here](#). **One word of warning, though: please do make sure you have got the correct MP. ChatGPT can get it wrong.**