

Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Bill

AMENDMENTS TO BE MOVED IN GRAND COMMITTEE

After Clause 2

BARONESS RITCHIE OF DOWNPATRICK

Insert the following new Clause—

“Appointment of First Ministers

- (1) The Northern Ireland Act 1998 is amended as follows.
- (2) In subsection 16A (appointment of Ministers following Assembly election), leave out subsections (4) to (7) and subsection (9), and insert after subsection (3)—
 - “(3ZA) Each candidate for the office of joint First Minister must stand for election jointly with a candidate for the other office.
 - (3ZB) Two candidates standing jointly may not be elected to the two offices without one or more of the following measures of representational support—
 - (a) the support of a majority of members, a majority of designated Nationalists and a majority of designated Unionists; or
 - (b) the support of 60 per cent of members, 40 per cent of designated Nationalists and 40 per cent of designated Unionists; or
 - (c) the support of two thirds of members.
 - (3ZC) The First Minister and the deputy First Minister—
 - (a) may not take up office until each of them has affirmed the terms of the pledge of office; and
 - (b) subject to the provisions of this Part, hold office until the conclusion of the next election for First Ministers.”
- (3) In subsection (3)(a) the reference to “subsections (4) to (7)” is replaced by a reference to “subsections (3ZA) to (3ZC).”

Member’s explanatory statement

This new Clause would restore the Good Friday Agreement provision for joint election by the Assembly of the joint First Ministers.

Insert the following new Clause—

“First Minister and deputy First Minister to be referred to as Joint First Ministers

The First Minister and deputy First Minister elected under the Northern Ireland Act 1998 are to be referred to as Joint First Ministers, and all references in that Act (other than to their election) to the First Minister and deputy First Minister are to be read as references to the Joint First Ministers.”

Member’s explanatory statement

This new Clause provides that First Minister and deputy First Minister be referred to as Joint First Ministers reflecting their identical status, powers and responsibilities.

Clause 5

BARONESS SUTTIE

Page 7, line 39, at end insert—

““cross-community support” means—

- (a) the support of a majority of the members voting, a majority of the designated Nationalists voting, a majority of the designated Unionists voting, and a majority of the designated Others voting, or
- (b) the support of 60 per cent of the members voting, 40 per cent of the designated Nationalists voting, 40 per cent of the designated Unionists voting and 40 per cent of the designated Others voting;”

Member’s explanatory statement

This amendment changes the definition of cross-community support for the purpose of the use of the petition of concern, to give the votes of those designated as “Other” equal weight to those designated as ‘Unionist’ or ‘Nationalist’. It is intended to probe the use of designations within the Assembly.

Clause 8

BARONESS SUTTIE

Page 8, line 11, leave out “at the end of the period of two months beginning with” and insert “on”

Member’s explanatory statement

This amendment enables the Bill to be commenced with Royal Assent.

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30 November 2021
