

# Senedd Election Briefing 2026

KEY ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU VOTE



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# Introduction

## **Christian citizens should think carefully and prayerfully about how they vote in the elections for the Senedd on 7 May 2026.**

The Christian Institute is a registered charity and we cannot tell you how to vote. What we can do in this short briefing is address:

- why you should vote
- biblical priorities
- the voting system
- speaking to candidates and canvassers
- some issues to consider

## **WHY SHOULD WE VOTE?**

The State is a means of God's common grace. The Bible is very clear that the governing authorities act on God's behalf to restrain evil and promote what is good (Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2). This benefits all people, not just Christians.

As a general rule, Christians must follow the Lord Jesus Christ's command to render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's (Matthew 22:21).<sup>1</sup> Christians are citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:20) and also of the earthly nation in which God has placed us. The Christian's duty is to obey the governing authorities, unless they forbid what God requires, or require what God forbids (Acts 5:29). It is our earnest prayer that Christians will have freedom to share the Gospel and live out the Christian life (1 Timothy 2:1-4). In praying "deliver us from evil" (Matthew 6:13) we are praying against the persecution of the Church as well as against personal temptation.

Romans 13 makes clear that God has ordained the governing authorities in every country, whether they are Christian or not. Thanks to God's common grace, there

are many non-Christians who take the right view on particular issues. Nobody's thinking is wrong at every point. Politicians who disagreed with Christians about redefining marriage can still be strongly against assisted suicide or liberalising cannabis laws. Some atheists will strongly defend the free speech of Christians. Like the prophet Daniel, God's people must encourage leadership that promotes truth and righteousness. Daniel not only urged King Nebuchadnezzar to renounce his sins and his wickedness; he pleaded with the king to practise righteousness and show kindness to the oppressed (Daniel 4:27).

Unlike Daniel, Christians in Wales today get to play a part in electing their leaders. In a democracy, everybody has the legal right to vote. Billions of people around the world do not enjoy the same freedoms as we have here. We elect Members of the Senedd and so ultimately the Welsh Government. We help choose 'Caesar'. So voting is a privilege and a serious responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

The election provides an opportunity for Christians to speak out and play their part. Governments can make it easier or harder to live freely as a Christian or to share the Gospel. Believers have to make a judgement about how their vote can be used to best effect.

## **BIBLICAL PRIORITIES**

When it comes to matters of public policy, Christians have to assess biblical priorities.

The Lord Jesus Christ criticised the Pharisees and told them that they had neglected the more important matters of the law: justice, mercy and faithfulness

(Matthew 23:23). God's commands tell us what constitutes these.

We can also distinguish those political issues on which the Bible is absolutely clear from those on which it is not.

For instance, the Bible is not clear on how to improve access to GPs or the most appropriate level of university tuition fees. To decide on these issues involves a detailed assessment of the facts and the exercise of judgement based on experience. Many situations in ordinary life are at this level, and so are many political issues.

Very often, making a Christian judgement depends on the wise assessment of several biblical principles. This can result in Christians arriving at different conclusions. For example, we know for certain that the State has a right to levy taxes (Romans 13:7). But Christians who hold to biblical truth can legitimately disagree on the level of particular taxes.

Yet at the other end of the spectrum, the Bible is "clear, direct, and decisive" about a whole host of political issues.<sup>3</sup> For example, a vote for abortion or euthanasia is a vote to break the Sixth Commandment (Exodus 20:13).

The new Senedd elected on 7 May 2026 could vote on laws affecting religious liberty, freedom of speech, transgenderism, the sanctity of life, education and parental rights. These are all issues of concern to Christians.

Biblical Christians believe that the Gospel is paramount. Salvation is only found in Christ, not in any political programme. Yet followers of Christ are also to care about their world, being salt and light in our society. In order for that to happen, there has to be freedom for the Gospel: religious liberty is a crucial issue.

Many Christians are gravely concerned when legislative proposals intrude into ordinary family life. Christians believe that governing authorities are established by God, but at the same time the Government is not responsible for everything. Indeed, if there is to be freedom, it must not be.

It is important to say that society is more than the State. Society is made up of families, as well as many institutions and organisations between the State and the citizen. Government by itself cannot solve all our problems, or even come remotely close.

## VOTING SYSTEM

The voting system for elections to the Senedd has changed to a closed proportional list system. Each elector will only have one vote, for a political party rather than individual candidates (except independent candidates). The ballot paper will still show the full list of candidates in your constituency.

If a party or independent candidate wins enough votes, they will win one or more seats in the Senedd. The aim of the system is to ensure that the number of seats won reflects the percentage of votes each party (or independent candidate) gets. Voting for parties rather than candidates means finding out the policies, and past record, of the political parties is all the more important. You are also free to vote for individuals who have no party affiliation, in which case you will also want to know their views.

It is highly unlikely that you will find a party or a candidate you feel has all the right views. For many Christians, there is a genuine dilemma over who to vote for. These are decisions which ultimately only you can make. Christians should exercise their conscience in these matters. In making your decision, you may wish to consider how the parties fared in previous elections.

**i For the 2021 results, see:**  
[bit.ly/seneddresults2021](https://bit.ly/seneddresults2021)

## SPEAKING TO CANVASSERS

Candidates or other party representatives may contact you to ask how you intend to vote. This presents an ideal opportunity to raise concerns and to find out where the

parties stand on biblical issues, with a view to promoting wider debate on those matters.

Think through one or two issues and have questions ready in case canvassers contact you. Limit yourself to the one or two issues with which you are most concerned. Be prepared to give a reason for your view.

If you speak to the candidates themselves, ask if they are willing to raise your concerns in the Senedd, if elected. If they say that they will, you can hold them to their promise should they be elected.

If you speak to a representative canvassing on behalf of the party, ask for your concerns to be forwarded. The very act of asking questions is a Christian witness.

## CONTACTING CANDIDATES

You can contact your candidates by letter, email or social media in order to raise your concerns. This way you can be sure that all the candidates have been made aware of the issues important to you.

If you contact a candidate, keep things short, but do raise specific points. Make sure you tell them you are a constituent. You could swap notes with other Christian friends who have had contact with a candidate.

**i Use your postcode to find your constituency and candidates' contact details:**  
[whocanivotefor.co.uk](http://whocanivotefor.co.uk)

There are many ways of being a Christian citizen, but elections provide excellent opportunities for Christians to be salt and light in society. We must pray for wisdom and speak out for the truth. Christians must weigh up the evidence, remembering that God has promised to give wisdom generously to those who ask him (James 1:5).

## ELECTION BACKGROUND

Prior to dissolution for the election, there were 60 Members of the Senedd (MSs). Of these, 40 represented single-member constituencies and 20 were regional representatives, four from each of the five electoral regions. Following electoral reforms, there will be 96 MSs, with six representatives from each of the new 16 constituencies.

**i For more information, see [bit.ly/seneddvotingsystem](http://bit.ly/seneddvotingsystem)**

Welsh Labour formed a minority Government following the last Senedd election in May 2021, with the party's then leader Mark Drakeford as First Minister. Vaughan Gething replaced him as party leader and First Minister in March 2024. Eluned Morgan became Welsh Labour leader in July 2024 and First Minister in August 2024.

Before dissolution for this election, Welsh Labour had 29 seats, the Welsh Conservatives 13, Plaid Cymru 13, Reform UK two and the Welsh Liberal Democrats one. There were also two independent MSs.

# Some issues to consider

## 1. EDUCATION



Parents are the primary educators of their children. This biblical truth is specifically acknowledged by Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 and the European Convention on Human Rights. It remains the case even when parents decide to delegate some educational provision to schools.

The Curriculum for Wales began being rolled out in 2022. By September 2026, all pupils in state schools will be taught using this framework. Schools are now required to teach content which is primarily ‘wellbeing’ focussed rather than academic, vocational or technical. The curriculum has been criticised for its loose framework and shortage of subject-specific content, which encourages teaching to become politicised and prioritises ideology over knowledge.

The Curriculum for Wales has renamed Religious Education as Religion, Values and Ethics (RVE) and takes a “pluralistic” approach. It must reflect that religious traditions in Wales are mainly Christian but take into account other principal religions and non-religious philosophical convictions. There are concerns that RVE teaching will be vague, shallow and ineffective.

The new curriculum also introduced the highly controversial Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code, which has imposed a radical ‘rights-based’ ideology on school children. It prioritises gender identity over biological sex, omitting

mentions of ‘men’, ‘women’, ‘boys’, or ‘girls’, and requiring pupils to be taught about the diversity of gender.

The rights of parents to withdraw their child from RSE and RVE have been removed under the new curriculum.

The Welsh Government has claimed it will use the best available evidence, including the Cass Review, to produce guidance for schools on how to care for gender-confused pupils. Schools need authoritative guidance that clearly states the law on use of toilets, changing rooms, residential accommodation and sports participation by pupils and makes clear that ‘social transition’ of pupils by schools without the knowledge of parents is prohibited.

## 2. ASSISTED SUICIDE



Changing the law on assisted suicide is a reserved matter. However, because health is devolved, the Senedd would have an important say in how any such change would be implemented in Wales if passed by Westminster.

In February 2026, MSs were asked to vote on a legislative consent motion (LCM) connected to Kim Leadbeater MP’s Private Member’s Bill to introduce assisted suicide. This was approved by 28 votes to 23, with two abstentions (see vote at [bit.ly/seneddAS2026](https://bit.ly/seneddAS2026)). However, MS

also voted by more than two to one to criticise the “lack of thorough consideration of the constitutional implications of this Bill for Wales” (see vote at [bit.ly/seneddAS2026amdt](https://bit.ly/seneddAS2026amdt)).

The LCM centred on how Leadbeater’s Bill would be practised in Wales, and was not a vote on the principle of assisted suicide. However, in October 2024, when MSs did consider the principle of assisted suicide, they voted against it by 26 votes to 19, with nine abstentions (see vote at [bit.ly/seneddAS2024](https://bit.ly/seneddAS2024)).

Assisted suicide denies the value of human life as created in the image of God. Allowing doctors and others to help vulnerable people kill themselves is the ultimate in hopelessness. It pressures them into ending their lives prematurely for fear of being a burden on others. The choice to die can quickly become the duty to die. True compassion for such people means valuing their lives and supporting palliative care for all who need it.

The US state of Oregon has had an assisted suicide law for almost 30 years. Around half of the people who have died under the law there cited being a burden on family, friends, or caregivers as a reason they chose assisted suicide.<sup>4</sup>

There are no effective safeguards once these laws are introduced. The evidence from other countries shows that the eligibility criteria inevitably expand and those dying because of euthanasia and assisted suicide increases year on year.

Canada legalised ‘Medical Assistance in Dying’ (MAID) in 2016 but within five years scrapped the requirement for a person to be terminally ill, and plans to extend the law to those with mental illness from 2027.<sup>5</sup> There were 16,499 MAID deaths reported in 2024, an increase of 6.9% on 2023, and accounting for more than five per cent of all deaths.<sup>6</sup>

### 3. SMACKING



The Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) Bill was passed by the Senedd in January 2020, coming into force on 21 March 2022. It criminalises parents who give their child a mild smack.

In December 2025, the Be Reasonable campaign published a report assessing the first three years of the smacking ban. It found that since the Act came into force, hundreds of parents have faced criminal sanctions for actions previously deemed ‘reasonable’ by the law, and thousands of families have been subjected to social services investigations.<sup>7</sup>

The Welsh Government’s own review revealed increased pressures on social services staff and the police, resulting in child protection backlogs in some places – as the ban’s opponents had predicted. It also acknowledged that over 350 parents had entered the criminal justice system.<sup>8</sup>

The smacking ban does not help protect children, but risks criminalising ordinary mothers and fathers. There are lots of ways to teach a child right from wrong, and every child is different. But parents who occasionally use a mild smack should not be treated as if they are child abusers.

It is grossly misleading to describe a loving smack as violent. The law already protects children from violence. Criminalising smacking means police and social workers have to deal with trivial reports, so that real cases of child abuse are now more likely to be missed.

In November 2025, The Christian Institute published a report showing that the evidence does not support claims that

mild smacking causes harm to children, particularly when delivered in the context of loving parenting.<sup>9</sup>

## 4. CONVERSION THERAPY



Activists are trying to bring in new laws against so-called conversion therapy. They say that we need new criminal offences to prohibit actions that seek to change, suppress or inhibit someone's sexual orientation or gender identity. They are calling for prayer, preaching, pastoral conversations and even parental decision-making that is not LGBT-affirming to be included in a new law.

Like everyone else, people who identify as LGBT are already protected from

physical and verbal abuse under existing law. No evidence has been produced of a gap that needs to be filled.

The Welsh Government's LGBTQ+ Action Plan aims to "ban all aspects of LGBTQ+ conversion practices that are within our current powers and seek the devolution of any necessary additional powers".<sup>10</sup>

Ministers set up a Working Group on Banning Conversion Practices to advise on actions to ban 'conversion practices' in Wales.<sup>11</sup> The Working Group produced a draft definition of these, "solely for policy and campaign purposes" and "not intended as a legal definition".<sup>12</sup> A note to the definition says, "Religious, faith-based, or spiritual settings are often the most cited environments correlated to conversion practices", and explicitly includes prayer.

The Working Group's latest minutes, from July 2023, suggest that the Welsh Government was awaiting a Westminster draft conversion therapy Bill,<sup>13</sup> which has still not been published. There are ongoing questions over whether the Senedd has the power to legislate in this area.

**REFERENCES:** **1** See also Mark 12:17; Luke 20:25 | **2** Cranfield, C E B, *The Bible and Christian Life*, T&T Clark Ltd, 1985, page 60 | **3** Grudem, W, *Politics - According to the Bible*, Zondervan, 2010, page 18 | **4** See *Oregon Death with Dignity Act: 2024 Data Summary*, Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division, March 2025, page 16. Figures from previous years calculated from annual reports since 2013. | **5** 'Eligibility for medical assistance in dying for persons suffering solely from mental illness extended to March 17, 2024', *Government of Canada*, 9 March 2023, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-justice/news/2023/03/eligibility-for-medical-assistance-in-dying-for-persons-suffering-solely-from-mental-illness-extended-to-march-17-2024.html> as at 20 March 2026; 'New medical assistance in dying legislation becomes law', *Government of Canada*, 17 March 2021, see <https://www.canada.ca/en/departement-justice/news/2021/03/new-medical-assistance-in-dying-legislation-becomes-law.html> as at 20 March 2026; 'Legislative Background: Bill C-7: Government of Canada's Legislative Response to the Superior Court of Québec Truchon Decision', *Government of Canada*, 1 September 2023, see <https://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/csj-sjc/pl/ad-am/c7/p1.html#intro> as at 20 March 2026 | **6** *Sixth Annual Report on Medical Assistance in Dying in Canada*, Health Canada, November 2025, pages 3 and 11 | **7** *The Effects of the Smacking Ban in Wales: Myths and truths*, Be Reasonable Wales, pages 5-8 | **8** *Children (Abolition of Defence of Reasonable Punishment) (Wales) Act 2020: evidence and data synthesis*, Welsh Government, December 2025, pages 27-28, 31 | **9** *Does Smacking Contribute to Negative Outcomes for Children?*, The Christian Institute, November 2025 | **10** LGBTQ+ Action Plan for Wales, Welsh Government, February 2023, page 20 | **11** 'Banning conversion practices in Wales', *Welsh Government*, 17 May 2024, see <https://www.gov.wales/banning-conversion-practices-wales> as at 20 March 2026 | **12** 'Draft definition of conversion practices', *Working Group on Banning Conversion Practices*, 18 August 2023, see <https://www.gov.wales/working-group-banning-conversion-practices/draft-definition-conversion-practices> as at 20 March 2026 | **13** 'Banning conversion practices in Wales', *Welsh Government*, 17 May 2024, see <https://www.gov.wales/banning-conversion-practices-wales> as at 20 March 2026; 'Meeting Notes for the Working Group on Banning of Conversion Practices', 25 July 2023, see <https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-01/25-july-2023-meeting-note.pdf> as at 20 March 2026

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As a Christian citizen, you have the opportunity to vote. It is a serious responsibility.

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