

P-04-488 The right to decide: an end to the compulsory study of Welsh to GCSE - Correspondence from the petitioner to the clerking team, 07.06.2013

Dear Ms Giddins,

I strongly oppose the compulsory requirement of Welsh language teaching in secondary schools. This is despite my sincere desire to see the language strengthened in its role in the cultural life of Welsh society: I studied Welsh until I was 18 and I was a member of the Urdd.

My justification is as follows:

One volunteer is worth ten pressed men and nobody likes conscription. The policy probably breeds resentment in our youth, as any poll would show if the government had the courage of its convictions;

Most young people can only handle one foreign language to GCSE. French or Spanish are a good springboard to other language skills, Welsh is not. I speak from experience, as a good base in Latin allowed me to get by in French, Spanish and Italian. Useful when I worked for several years as a trade diplomat in Geneva for the Hong Kong government;

The world does business and science in English. Compulsory Welsh may be seen by the rest of the World as an inward looking attitude, or misplaced cultural chauvinism. Our children must go out to meet the world, which is English speaking. Most postgrad science or business courses in Europe are now conducted in English. France will soon offer most undergrad science in the English language. The language of international business and diplomacy is English. This is not to our national disadvantage. The Welsh are masters of the language and very gifted communicators. How often have you received the national compliment from an Englishman, of the fondly remembered inspiration that came from a Welsh teacher? These English language skills should be celebrated, not impliedly apologised for..

Please place this email before the Committee.

Regards,

Dai Fitzpatrick