

Written evidence from Roger Clarke (TEB 01)

**Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee
The Elections Bill inquiry**

I am concerned that the attempt to tackle one small problem [fraud] through tighter voter identification requirements will create a much bigger problem: disenfranchisement.

The objective should be to get as many people as possible on to the electoral register, and taking part in voting. This is an important way of creating a healthy democracy, where citizens assume responsibility for the government of the country.

Restricting voting to people already in possession of certain kinds of documentation, even with alternative means of obtaining validation, is likely to remove large numbers of existing voters and deter others. Less well-off people tend not to have passports and driving licences.

A better alternative would be automatic voter registration at age 18, parallel to other quasi-automatic processes such as NHS registration and obtaining a National Insurance number.

I hope that the Committee will argue strongly for a system which extends voting opportunities to all eligible citizens.

August 2021