

Written Evidence from Conservatives Abroad (TEB 51)

Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee The Elections Bill inquiry

Overseas Voting

Conservatives Abroad is the British Conservative Party's global network of members & supporters living overseas and currently has members & supporters in over 100 countries & territories.

1. We strongly support the Bill's removal of the current 15 year rule restricting overseas voting and firmly believe that any British citizen with a connection to the UK should enjoy the optionality to vote regardless of where they live and length of overseas residency.
2. We note that analysis by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance has found that in 2017 overseas voting was allowed by 115 countries and territories around the world meaning that allowing your non-resident citizens to vote in elections is the default position around the globe and is not the exception.
<https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voting-from-abroad-the-international-idea-handbook.pdf> P3
3. We also strongly support this section of the Bill because British citizens living and working overseas have valuable international insights and connections for Global Britain and probably the largest single segment of British citizens to have still been subject to a restricted franchise.
4. We strongly support the Bill's introduction of a previous residence condition allowing for overseas voters not previously registered to also vote. This particularly effects family members who moved overseas with their parents before they turned 18 years of age.
5. We strongly support the measure to harmonise the electoral roll registration period for overseas voters to the same 3 years that onshore voters will have and strongly believe the registration system for overseas voters should be the same as for domestic voters.

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