

**Conference motion – For a democratic choice in Labour leadership elections**

Conference notes:

- *the 9.6 per cent increase in Labour’s general election vote share (from 2015 to 2017) under Jeremy Corbyn’s Leadership.*
- *continual Tory Government attacks on people’s living standards, which Labour is committed to halt and our plans to improve people’s lives, combat racism, implement a progressive international agenda and tackle climate change.*
- *current Labour leadership election rules (when there is a vacancy) are not ideal, in that they require a candidate to receive a minimum of 10 per cent of Labour MPs’ and MEPs’ nominations for a place on the ballot paper – allowing MPs to veto who can stand and potentially block the preferred choice of Labour’s Members, Affiliated Supporters and Registered Supporters. Within living memory, a candidate merely required one nomination and seconder from the PLP.*

Conference believes:

- *a potential leadership candidate who resolutely defends people’s living standards and could command the support of the majority of the party, must be allowed to stand for Party Leader. That is basic democracy.*
- *it is vital when a vacancy next arises for Leader that a candidate with such progressive policies and commitment can stand for election and be elected Leader – if that is the choice of Labour Members, Affiliated Supporters and Registered Supporters.*

Conference notes the Democracy Review contained a proposal in line with this motion.

Conference therefore asks the NEC to bring forward to 2020 Conference a range of options, including the Democracy Review proposal, to widen the range of potential candidates.

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## **Labour leadership election nomination thresholds rules – a short briefing**

Under current Labour Party rules (in 2019), when there is next a vacancy for Leader there is no guarantee that a candidate with a progressive agenda, similar to the current leadership, would be able to stand for the post of Leader. MPs have, in effect, a veto over who can stand for Leader.

The recommendation put forward by the 2018 Democracy Review – which would have reduced the threshold of MPs/MEPs nominations to five per cent – was not voted on at the 2018 Conference.

Under the current rules, any potential candidate requires nominations from at least ten per cent of MPs plus MEPs, in order to secure a place on the ballot paper. That would allow MPs and MEPs to block a popular progressive candidate from standing in a leadership election.

The ten per cent threshold of MPs/MEPs would currently mean 26 nominations from MPs/MEPs, far more than the number that supported Jeremy Corbyn in 2015, when only approximately 15 MPs voted for him to be Leader. Jeremy Corbyn got on the ballot paper that year because right wing Labour MPs 'lent' him their nominations anticipating his defeat – they do not intend to repeat this 'mistake' in future.

The rules for leadership elections have been altered many times over the past 40 years. The main changes to the nominations stage have been as follows:-

- 1) Prior to 1980s the nomination threshold was just two MPs (Nomination and Seconder). Then, till 1988, the threshold was 5% of MPs. In 1988 it was raised to 10% of MPs.
- 2) By the time of the 2015 leadership election the nomination threshold for when there is a vacancy had risen to 15% of MPs. Then at the 2017 Labour Conference this threshold was lowered from 15% MPs and MEPs to 10%.
- 4) In 2018, the Democracy Review put forward a proposal which could be loosely described as '10% PLP/EPLP **OR** 10% CLPs+5% PLP/EPLP **OR** 10% Affiliates + 5% PLP/EPLP'. The proposal was not agreed at Labour's NEC on 22 September 2018 and an alternative formula (which could be described as '10% PLP/EPLP **PLUS EITHER** 5% CLPs **OR** 5% Affiliates') was agreed by the NEC and put to the 2018 Conference. This latter proposal was agreed by the Conference – however 69.16% of the CLP vote was cast against it.
- 5) The current rules ('10% PLP/EPLP **PLUS EITHER** 5% CLPs **OR** 5% Affiliates') require a potential candidate to secure the nomination of ten per cent of MPs plus MEPs, plus **either** five per cent of CLPs **or** five per cent of affiliates (the precise formula being: at least 3 affiliates – at least 2

of which shall be trade union affiliates – comprising 5 per cent of affiliated membership).