



Young People's Rights Review

Josh MacRae MSYP - Political Participation

Good afternoon.

I'm Josh MacRae MSYP and I represent the sunny constituency of Aberdeenshire East.

Following consultation with over 100 of my constituents in recent weeks both in schools and local youth platforms, I have identified concerns over the lack of political literacy among young people. The Scottish Independence Referendum of 2014 enthused new voters across Scotland, provoking a political conversation of unprecedented size. Since then, efforts have been made to continue the momentum created from that historic vote, including the September 2016 resource from Education Scotland entitled 'You decide', which aims to promote political literacy.

Based on the results from my recent consultation, four out of five young people in my constituency believe that political education should be taught in schools. Indeed, my colleagues in the Scottish Youth Parliament passed a motion on this very issue last October, with 89% in favour, and SYP recommended this in its recent response to the Scottish Government's Consultation Paper on Electoral Reform. When I asked my constituents how such political education should be provided, many responded with Personal and Social Education classes.

I welcome that the issue of PSE reform has been recognised by the Scottish Government given the inclusion of the PSE review in action 7.10 to be carried out by the end of 2018 in its draft Children and Young People's Rights Action Plan. However, there is no specific reference to political literacy in the review's scope. Therefore, **I urge the Scottish Government to include a specific action recommending that political literacy is included in the S3 and S4 PSE courses - given that this is when young people can register and cast their vote in Scottish elections.**

Young people have an interest in politics. That much is clear. It is promising to note that three in five of my constituents responded to the statement 'I find politics boring' in disagreement. Yet, we still have work to do. Urgent action is needed to improve political literacy among young people and show publicly that elected representatives want to hear the views of the next generation of voters.

Let us teach our young people how to use their right to vote to the fullest extent by providing political education in Scottish secondary schools, '*Right Here, Right Now*'.

Thank you.