

Suggested Rule Change

Right of Party members to select candidates

The Labour Party Rule Book 2013 Chapter 5 Selections, rights and responsibilities of candidates for elected public office, Clause I General rules for selections for public office, section 2 (page 22) reads as follows:

“Party units shall act in accordance with guidance that shall be issued by the NEC in the application of these rules. The NEC has the authority to modify these rules and any procedural rules and guidelines as required to meet particular circumstances or to further the stated objectives and principles of these rules. Further the NEC has the power to impose candidates where it deems this is required by the circumstances.”

Amendment:

Delete the words ‘Further the NEC has the power to impose candidates where it deems this is required by the circumstances.’ And replace with:

“However, the NEC shall not override the general right of party members who reside in the electoral area concerned to participate in any selection except where the party finds itself for any reason without a duly selected candidate within two weeks of the close of nominations. In such cases, the NEC may appoint a selection panel of its members drawn by lot from those available (or, in the case of candidates other than for the UK or European parliament, available members of the NEC or appropriate Regional Board members or party officials), plus the same number of members appointed by the appropriate party body for the electoral area concerned. In other cases where the timetable requires an abbreviated process and the NEC considers it necessary to impose a shortlist, and in the event of a parliamentary by-election, the NEC may appoint a shortlisting panel with the same composition and in the same manner as the shortlisting panel described in this paragraph. This panel shall draw up a shortlist of not fewer than six candidates (unless fewer than six candidates have been nominated) if time permits from those nominated by party branches (or from specially convened meetings of members within ward boundaries where there are no members branches) and affiliated organisations, giving due cognisance to the weight of nominations received, and otherwise from those who have self-nominated.”

Supporting Arguments

At recent general elections, there has been considerable concern about the number of late selections where candidates have been ‘parachuted’ into constituencies either by imposing candidates selected without any local involvement or by imposing shortlists which excluded popular local candidates. In many cases the time taken to organise the NEC selection or shortlisting process was no quicker than would have been possible at a local level by reducing the time allowed in the normal timetables for selection. In 2010, such decisions were taken without even the presence of local observers. This amendment therefore restricts the imposition of candidates to the most extreme circumstances, and in the case of imposition of either candidate or shortlist, that decisions are taken jointly with local representatives. Where it is necessary to impose a shortlist, it should still be done jointly, and from those nominated locally whenever possible.

The closing date for constitutional amendments is 5pm, Fri 21 June 2013.