

Suggested Rule Change

Election of the Conference Arrangements Committee (constituency section) by OMOV

The Labour Party Rule Book 2013, Chapter 4 Elections of national officers of the party and national committees, Clause III Procedural rules for elections for national committees, subclause B Election of Conference Arrangements Committee, (i) b. reads as follows:

‘The other two members, at least one of whom shall be a woman, nominated by CLPs shall be elected by means of a ballot among delegates from CLPs at party conference on a card vote basis as provided in these rules Chapter 3.III.3.A above.’

Amendment

Delete: ‘among delegates from CLPs at party conference on a card vote basis as provided in these rules Chapter 3.III.3.A above.’

Replace with: ‘conducted among all eligible individual members of the party by means of a national one-member-one-vote postal ballot conducted to guidelines laid down by the NEC.’

Supporting argument

In recent years there has been a consistent trend towards giving all party members a direct vote for their representatives on our national committees. These moves have given the grassroots membership some rights and influence within their own party, which is particularly important given the countertrend towards more power accruing to the centre and the party machine.

In 1997, party members were given the right to elect the constituency section of the NEC by one member-one-vote (OMOV) and recently they were further given the right to elect the constituency section of the National Policy Forum (NPF) by OMOV. The Conference Arrangements Committee (CAC) is the Standing Orders Committee of the party’s annual conference and it has two constituency seats (at least one of which must be held by a woman). These two seats are elected every second year. It is an important committee, for example it decides which conference motions from CLPs are valid and which are not valid. It would therefore be an important step forward for grassroots democracy if these two constituency seats on the CAC were also to be elected by means of OMOV. This reform need not cost extra money because the CAC election could run alongside the OMOV elections for the NEC and NPF. A considerable number of CLPs no longer send delegates to conference and therefore they and their members are totally disenfranchised from the CAC election. This reform would effectively enfranchise every member in every CLP.

Closing date for constitutional amendments: 21 June 2013