

# **Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee**

## **4th Meeting 2023 (Session 6), Thursday 9 March 2023**

### **Correspondence from Stuart McMillan MSP on the Proxy Voting Scheme**

#### **Introduction**

1. Stuart McMillan MSP has written to the Convener in relation to the Proxy Voting Scheme Pilot (email attached in Annexe).
2. In his correspondence, Stuart McMillan MSP invites the Committee to consider providing for MSPs who are not able to participate in Chamber proceedings as they are representing the Parliament in Commonwealth Parliamentary Association activities to be able to use the Proxy Voting Scheme.

#### **The Proxy Voting Scheme Pilot**

3. The Proxy Voting Scheme is in place until 31 December 2023. It provides for a Member to arrange for their vote to be cast by another member acting as a proxy where—
  - Illness where the Member is unable to attend the Parliament (when a Member has a severe illness, requires medical intervention or has an illness that prevents them from attending the Parliament for a sustained period of time)
  - Parental leave (including mothers and fathers taking leave in relation to the birth or adoption of a child; Members fostering or taking on a kinship role; and Members who experience complications relating to pregnancy)
  - Bereavement
  - Attending to a person who appears to be near the end of life
4. The Committee has set out its intention to evaluate the scheme before proposing a permanent rule change.

## Committee consideration

5. The Committee is invited to consider the correspondence from Stuart McMillan MSP and agree a response.

**SPPA Committee clerks  
March 2023**

**Annexe A – Correspondence from Stuart McMillan MSP**

Dear Martin,

I hope you are well.

I write with regards the recently implemented Proxy System.

As you will be aware, I was the first MSP to use the system for the passing of my mother. I am therefore grateful for the system being in place.

You will be aware of a previous discussion we had with regards the use of the system for MSPs who are not in Parliament as they are representing the Parliament outside of Scotland. In some instances, there will be multiple MSPs from across the Chamber attending these events thus the Proxy system will not be required. There are however instances when a sole MSP leaves. This does happen for me as I represent the Scottish Parliament as part of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA).

I am a now member of the International Executive Committee (EXCO) of the CPA and this body meets at least twice per year. I am our sole representative thus have no opportunity for a pairing arrangement.

As you will be aware, with your own past involvement, there are opportunities for MSPs to attend CPA events out-with Scotland. Sometimes, we only have one space to be allocated. I know it can be difficult for MSPs to apply for these worthwhile events as they are not guaranteed to be slipped by their Parliamentary groups. I believe this does little to enhance our connections with others in the Commonwealth family.

I would be grateful if CPA activities can also be considered for the new Proxy voting mechanism please. I accept, it would be beneficial for me in fulfilling my role as our representative on EXCO but it would also benefit all colleagues when they wish to represent our Parliament at CPA events.

I am happy to discuss this further with the Standards, Procedures and Public Appointments Committee if required.

Best Regards

Stuart

**Stuart McMillan MSP**