

Greens warn Tory attack on democracy can only be stopped if other parties work together to stop power grab



28 May 2017

***Deputy leader Amelia Womack: “Progressive parties have a responsibility to the public to work together to protect democracy”**

Green Party deputy leader, Amelia Womack, will today (May 28) use a high profile panel at Hay Festival to warn Labour and the Lib Dems that they urgently need to come together in an attempt to stop what she will describe as an “attack on democracy” by the Conservative Party.

Womack will point to pledges made in the Conservative manifesto to change the voting rules for mayoral and assembly elections in England and Wales in ways that will favour them [1]. The Conservatives want these elections to be conducted using first past the post, a system which usually favour larger parties.

Womack will appear on a panel with Guardian columnist Zoe Williams, author David Boyle and Andrew Simms of the New Weather Institute to discuss ‘The Alternative – Is it time for a new progressive politics to arise in Britain?’ [2].

Speaking ahead of the festival, Womack said:

“There’s no denying our voting system is broken but the Tories are trying to overhaul it for the worse. Their push to spread the first past the post system to mayoral and assembly elections is an attempt to gain control at all levels and a direct attack on fairness within our democracy.

“Other progressive parties need to wake up to what’s happening. In particular Greens, Labour and the Lib Dems have a responsibility to stand up for every member of the public’s right to a vote that counts, to democracy. We should work together to stop this power grab and advocate for proportional representation, which is widely supported [3] and would result in fairer representation in the age of multi-party politics.

“The Labour leadership’s refusal to even have a conversation about electoral alliances during the election campaign [4] is dangerously neglectful of the people they claim to represent. The Lib Dems were at least prepared to talk but, sadly, were not able to agree any reciprocal agreements in key constituencies. Despite the obvious challenges around forming electoral alliances during a snap general election campaign, we have seen significant and growing grassroots support for doing politics differently, with widespread recognition that our broken electoral system is denying too many people a voice. It will be deeply disappointing if the other progressive

parties continue to be complicit in this after June 8.

“This is the most important election in a generation and the outcome will affect us for years to come – but it is not the end of the road and we must consider how to work together to build a positive future for the next five, 10, 50 years.

“When I’ve been on the doorstep talking to voters across the country the appetite for grown up politics is there, we just need the political will to make it work. I hope that progressive parties will be able to get round the table, look at the state of the political system and agree that it needs root and branch reform.”

Ends

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

<http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/june2017/2017/05/are-conservatives-trying-change-rules-politics-so-they-never-lose-again>

<https://www.hayfestival.com/p-12259-zoe-williams-amelia-womack-david-boyle-andrew-simms.aspx>

<https://www.change.org/p/make-this-the-last-general-election-to-use-our-broken-voting-system>

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/05/09/lucas-labour-and-lib-dems-have-betrayed-the-people-they-represent/>

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