



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**Committee on Procedures
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PROXY VOTING

You will be aware of the Committee's ongoing review into proxy voting which considers instances when proxy voting could be retained on a more permanent basis, and how this might be reflected in Standing Orders.

Since the Committee last consulted with Parties and Independent Members in October 2020 and following further consideration by the Committee, there was consensus amongst Members that any proposal to introduce proxy voting on a permanent basis should include parental leave and long-term illness.

However, during its consideration of a draft motion to amend the temporary provision in Standing Order 112(8) regarding the 9.30am deadline to nominate a proxy vote, a number of Members discussed examples of "unforeseen circumstances" which could potentially affect a Member and their ability to nominate a proxy on any given day. For example, a family emergency or adverse weather conditions. The Committee was reminded that Standing Order 112(8) is a temporary provision and that the Committee is already considering introducing proxy voting on a permanent basis under the review.

Subsequently, the Committee further discussed this issue and is considering whether to potentially extend the scope of the previously agreed policy position to include "unforeseen circumstances" in its review. The Committee agreed that it would be constructive to consult with Party Whips with regard to the inclusion of "unforeseen circumstances", in order to ascertain if there would be broader support for this proposal.

Therefore, I would be grateful if you could provide the Committee with your views on whether you would support the inclusion of "unforeseen circumstances" in the scope of the review.

Please provide your views by 26 April 2021. Responses should be submitted electronically to committee.procedures@niassembly.gov.uk

Submissions may be published by the Committee unless otherwise indicated.

Any queries should be directed to the Clerk at emer.boyle@niassembly.gov.uk or by telephone on 21678
Yours sincerely,

Carál Ní Chuilín

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Chairperson, Committee on Procedures.