



# Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Act 2022

## 2022 CHAPTER 2

### *Petitions of concern*

#### **6 Petitions of concern**

For section 42 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 substitute—

##### **“42 Petitions of concern**

- (1) If a petition expressing concern about a matter which is to be voted on by the Assembly is—
  - (a) presented to the Assembly by 30 members, and
  - (b) on the day after the consideration period, confirmed by 30 members, the vote on that matter requires cross-community support.
- (2) If such a petition is presented, the vote on the matter to which it relates may not take place until after the day mentioned in subsection (1)(b).
- (3) The members presenting or confirming a petition must include—
  - (a) one member who belongs to a political party and one member who belongs to a different political party,
  - (b) one member who belongs to a political party and one member who does not belong to a political party and did not belong to a political party when returned as a member of the Assembly, or
  - (c) two members who do not belong to a political party and did not belong to a political party when returned as members of the Assembly.
- (4) A matter may not be the subject of a petition if it—
  - (a) concerns a sanction in relation to the conduct of a Minister or other member of the Assembly;

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**Changes to legislation:** There are currently no known outstanding effects for the Northern Ireland (Ministers, Elections and Petitions of Concern) Act 2022, Cross Heading: Petitions of concern. (See end of Document for details)

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- (b) concerns the vote on the general principles of a Bill referred to in section 13(1)(a);
  - (c) is a matter specified in standing orders made under subsection (6)(c).
- (5) A petition under this section may not be presented or confirmed by the Presiding Officer or a deputy Presiding Officer.
- (6) Standing orders must—
- (a) make provision with respect to the procedure to be followed in presenting and confirming a petition under this section (which may include provision specifying a minimum period between the presentation of the petition and the time when the vote on the matter to which it relates would take place if not postponed by the petition);
  - (b) provide that the matter to which a petition under this section relates may be referred, in accordance with paragraphs 11 and 13 of Strand One of the Belfast Agreement, to the committee established under section 13(3)(a);
  - (c) specify further matters that may not be the subject of a petition under this section, for the purposes of fully implementing paragraph 2.2.4 of Annex B of Part 2 of The New Decade, New Approach Deal;
  - (d) make provision for such steps to be taken during the consideration period as may be necessary for the purposes of fully implementing paragraph 2.2.7 of Annex B of Part 2 of The New Decade, New Approach Deal.
- (7) If the day mentioned in paragraph (b) of subsection (1) is not a working day that paragraph is to be read as referring to the next day that is a working day.
- (8) In this section—
- “the consideration period” means the period of 14 days beginning with the day on which the petition is presented;
  - “working day” means any day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday in Northern Ireland.”

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**Commencement Information**

**II** S. 6 in force at Royal Assent, see **s. 9**

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