

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

20th June 2018

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RE: ACCESS TO ELECTED OFFICE FUND.

Thank you for contacting me recently about access to elected office for people with disabilities; your comments upon which I read with great interest.

Like you, I feel very strongly that our public offices should reflect the diversity of our society. Sadly, at present, people with disabilities in this country are not sufficiently represented.

I want businesses and other organisations to place diversity and inclusivity at the heart of their work. To achieve this, politicians should lead by example. It is clear to me that political parties have a duty to ensure they encourage and support their candidates and employees, and ensure there is a completely level playing field when it comes to recruitment.

I am encouraged that the Government Equalities Office, together with the office for Disability Issues and the Cabinet Office, will work with specialist organisations and people with disabilities. Although the main responsibility for this sits with political parties themselves, there are ways the Government can help them to do this. Within the next year, I hope to see political parties offering and advertising support, as well as measures in place for independent candidates.

While this work is ongoing, I know that colleagues in the Government Equalities Office want to ensure people with disabilities can still run for office. I welcome the creation of a fund of up to £250,000 to support candidates with disabilities. I look forward to more details on this, when they are set out in due course.

This fund should not prevent political parties from continuing to develop their own measures. Instead, it should help them to prioritise this extremely important issue and take action to ensure no one is disadvantaged in the democratic process.

Once again, thank you for having taken the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

With best wishes,

Tom

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE