

TOM PURSGLOVE MP
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

10th September 2021

Dear Constance,

RE: VOTER ID

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of voter ID. I have read your comments on this issue with interest.

A secure electoral system is a vital component of a healthy democracy, and the public must have confidence that our elections are secure and fit for the 21st Century. Asking voters to bring ID to their polling station is an important way of achieving this and the *Elections Bill* will put such a requirement into law.

Voter ID is not new. Northern Ireland has required paper ID at polling stations since 1985, and photo ID since 2003 - introduced by the last Labour Government. It has proved to be effective at tackling fraud and has not curtailed election turnout.

Identification to vote has been backed by the Electoral Commission and the Organisation for Security & Co-operation in Europe's Office for Democratic Institutions & Human Rights, which state that its absence is a security risk. At present, it is harder to take out a library book, or collect a parcel at a post office, than it is to vote in someone else's name.

In pilot schemes in 2018 and 2019, the overwhelming majority of people cast their vote without a problem and the success of the pilots proves that this is a reasonable and proportionate measure to take, and there was no notable adverse effect on turnout. The Electoral Commission also stated that *"the experience of taking part in the pilot scheme appears to have had a positive impact on people's perception of the security of the polling station process, and on their confidence in it... Polling station staff were satisfied with how polling day went and were confident that they could manage the process of people showing voter identification at future elections."*

Under the Government's proposals, anyone without an ID will be able to apply for a new free one - meaning that no voter will be disenfranchised.

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 PURSGLOVE MP
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE