



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**

LONDON SW1A 0AA

7<sup>th</sup> May 2024

*Dear Content,*

**RE: POLITICAL REFORM**

Thank you for your recent correspondence in respect of your desire to see political reform to the United Kingdom's constitution. I have read your comments with interest.

I understand your passion to improve the UK's political system. It is crucial that as politicians we always look for ways to improve, but I do believe we should be proud of the peaceful and democratic way we govern ourselves as a nation - something which in my experience is often envied by others from around the world.

Upholding public trust is essential to maintaining a robust political system. Members of Parliament are expected to adhere to high standards in their public life and we have rigorous processes in place for this. The UK already has strict laws regarding MPs' behaviour, with legal convictions of over 12 months resulting in MPs automatically losing their seats, and automatic recall elections if an MP is convicted of a crime. In Parliament, the 'Code of Conduct', the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards and the Committee on Standards and Privileges each regulate the conduct of MPs.

If an MP becomes a Minister they are also bound by the 'Ministerial Code'. There is always more we can do to make sure these standards are upheld, which is why the House of Commons 'Code of Conduct' was altered as recently as the 1st March 2023. These rules mean that politicians are governed by the same rules as everyone else, and are also rightly held to a higher standard.

Personally, I fully support First Past the Post (FPTP) as our electoral system and I do not agree with your views on Proportional Representation. FPTP is a tried-and-tested system that ensures stability and clear accountability to voters by giving them a direct relationship with their MP - a clear constituency link. It prevents disproportionate influence by minority parties with minimal public support, who typically end up holding the balance of power in PR systems.

I agree, however, that political power should be spread more evenly across the UK. The Government has already taken significant decisions which have devolved power away from Westminster. Since the publication of the 'Levelling Up White Paper' in 2022 alone, the Government has agreed six devolution deals with areas representing over seven million people. This includes two new Mayoral Combined Authorities and the first ever Mayoral Combined County Authority. In total, 64 percent of England now has a devolution deal - this is compared to the position in 2010, when there was no devolution in England beyond Greater London. Also, the movement of 22,000 Civil Service jobs outside of London will see greater number of senior civil servants working from outside the capital.



There is ongoing debate regarding the role of the House of Lords, which is why the 2019 Conservative Party Manifesto committed to “look at the broader aspects of our constitution”. However, I think we greatly benefit from having a chamber of experts that revises and scrutinises legislation, while respecting the primacy of the elected House of Commons. In terms of individuals who are offered places in the House of Lords, all prospective members are rigorously vetted by the House of Lords Appointments Commission (HOLAC).

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,*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Tom Pursglove', with a horizontal line underneath.

**TOM PURSGLOVE MP  
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT  
CORBY & EAST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE**