

CAMPAIGN FOR AN EFFECTIVE SECOND CHAMBER

THE CASE FOR AN APPOINTED SECOND CHAMBER

- A second chamber is necessary.
- The House of Lords fulfils functions that are qualitatively distinctive.
- The existing second chamber complements the work of the Commons
- The work of the Lords reduces the pressures on the Commons.
- The Lords fulfils well the functions of legislative scrutiny, debate, and administrative scrutiny.
- The existence of an appointed second chamber maintains the fundamental accountability of the political system, one body – the party-in-government – being responsible for public policy and answerable to the electors.
- The existing political system is distinctive for delivering the dual benefits of accountability and a productive second chamber.

An elected second chamber

- Has the potential to duplicate the Commons.
- Is likely to press for greater powers than those enjoyed by the existing House.
- Has the potential to conflict with the Commons, undermining accountability to electors.
- Is likely to result in legislative deals between the two chambers, generating outcomes that bear little relationship to the wishes of the electorate.
- May generate embarrassingly low voter turnouts.
- Offers no obvious added value in terms of improving the quality of legislation.

CONSTRUCTIVE ENGAGEMENT

To be opposed to an elected second chamber is not to be against change to the existing arrangements. There is a case for considering:

- Strengthening the scrutiny mechanisms of the House (greater use of subject-based select committees, more pre- and post-legislative scrutiny).
- Introducing new mechanisms for resolving disputes between the two Houses.
- Changing the means by which new members are appointed, with the introduction of a statutory appointments commission.
- Bringing in members from a wider range of backgrounds.
- Abolishing the by-election provision for replacing hereditary peers.
- Introducing greater transparency in the appointments process.