

**Press release:**

**15 March 2007**

## LORDS REFORM BILL PUBLISHED TODAY

The House of Lords Bill presented yesterday in the Lords by David Steel (Lord Steel of Aikwood) is today published and available.

David Steel comments:

“This bill has been expertly drafted by Lord Norton of Louth, Professor of Politics at Hull University, and approved by a large meeting of peers and MP’s of all parties who had been working on these proposals for some time, and at whose request I agreed to introduce the bill.

“Now that both Houses have voted against the basic proposal in the government’s white paper for a 50% elected 50% appointed Upper House, they have to go back to the drawing board. David Cameron has said he believes reform under a Conservative government can wait till its third term, and it is difficult to see a new Labour Prime Minister giving this legislative priority.

“That is why our all party group for ‘effective reform’ believes that without further delay we should proceed to put our own House in order. This bill proposes four reforms:

- 1) By ending the by-elections for hereditary peers it turns the remaining ones into de facto life peers and finally ends hereditary entry into our Upper House.**
- 2) It proposes the creation of a Statutory Appointments Commission to replace Prime Ministerial patronage for new peers.**
- 3) It authorises the government to proceed with a retirement package which should reduce the average age and decrease the present House of 740 by possibly 200.**
- 4) It enables peerages to be removed from those guilty of serious offences on the same basis as the Commons.**

I believe this sensible package would enable us to move forward with reform without prejudice to future changes.”

Editor’s Notes

Text of the bill and explanatory notes will be available shortly.

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