

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

HOUSE OF COMMONS  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

## PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCIES (AMENDMENT) BILL

*Twentieth Sitting*

*Wednesday 28 November 2018*

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Motion to adjourn considered.

Adjourned till Wednesday 5 December at Ten o'clock.

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**not later than**

**Sunday 2 December 2018**

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**The Committee consisted of the following Members:***Chairs:* MS NADINE DORRIES, †ALBERT OWEN

Allan, Lucy ( <i>Telford</i> ) (Con)	Mills, Nigel ( <i>Amber Valley</i> ) (Con)
Bone, Mr Peter ( <i>Wellingborough</i> ) (Con)	† Norris, Alex ( <i>Nottingham North</i> ) (Lab/Co-op)
† Charalambous, Bambos ( <i>Enfield, Southgate</i> ) (Lab)	Paisley, Ian ( <i>North Antrim</i> ) (DUP)
† Fletcher, Colleen ( <i>Coventry North East</i> ) (Lab)	† Smith, Chloe ( <i>Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office</i> )
† Foster, Kevin ( <i>Torbay</i> ) (Con)	Stewart, Bob ( <i>Beckenham</i> ) (Con)
Harper, Mr Mark ( <i>Forest of Dean</i> ) (Con)	Wiggin, Bill ( <i>North Herefordshire</i> ) (Con)
† Khan, Afzal ( <i>Manchester, Gorton</i> ) (Lab)	
Lee, Karen ( <i>Lincoln</i> ) (Lab)	Adam Mellows-Facer, <i>Committee Clerk</i>
† Linden, David ( <i>Glasgow East</i> ) (SNP)	
† Matheson, Christian ( <i>City of Chester</i> ) (Lab)	† <b>attended the Committee</b>

## Public Bill Committee

Wednesday 28 November 2018

[ALBERT OWEN *in the Chair*]

### Parliamentary Constituencies (Amendment) Bill

10 am

**The Chair:** Please ensure that all electronic devices are now switched to silent. I remind the Committee that we cannot consider the clauses of the Bill until the House has agreed to the money resolution.

**Afzal Khan** (Manchester, Gorton) (Lab): I beg to move, That the Committee do now adjourn.

I congratulate the Minister on the good news of her pregnancy. A shadow Minister who received the same good news went on leave. Before the Minister takes leave, I hope we will be able to make some progress on the Bill.

I understand that the Refugees (Family Reunion) Bill is also waiting for a money resolution. It seems as though it will start its Committee stage without one and so will join us in meeting every week only to adjourn. It is truly a sorry state of affairs that the Government are so afraid of challenge on such a broad range of issues, including boundaries and refugees, that they use procedure to block the Bills they cannot defeat. This is Executive overreach in its clearest and most damaging form. It is also an enormous waste of taxpayers' money and of our time as elected representatives.

**The Chair:** I add my congratulations to the Minister. I call David Linden.

**David Linden** (Glasgow East) (SNP): It is a pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Owen. I echo the congratulations to the Minister. I note that, during this Bill's Committee stage, three Members have either had children or announced that they have children on the way. That in itself probably sends a message that we seem to be doing a better job at procreation than at legislating. In all seriousness, I send my very best wishes to the Minister on behalf of myself and my party. I wish her and wee Alastair all the very best of luck.

**Christian Matheson** (City of Chester) (Lab): It is a great pleasure to serve under your chairmanship, Mr Owen, and an even greater pleasure to echo the words of my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton and the hon. Member for Glasgow East. This is a frustrating process but the Minister is very well thought of, not

only in the Committee but in the wider House. I wish her and her family a successful and easy next few months as they prepare for the new addition to their family.

The Prime Minister is currently away selling her Brexit deal. She has talked about the need to unify the House and the country, and I have to say that I think she is right. We need something to bring the House back together. I suggest that making progress with this Bill would be a way of unifying hon. Members from right across the House. The current boundary proposal, which lies on the table awaiting the drafting of the orders, does not, I believe, have the support of the House, but we could put that to the test. Putting those proposals to the test might bring a certain sense of unity across the House when hon. Members are given the chance to vote against them.

Hon. Members could then unify behind the proposal made by my hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton and bring the House back together again. Making progress with the Bill might have some advantages for the Government, who obviously have their own problems with disunity at the moment. It would bring them back together and give them focus. I commend to the Minister that that might be a really good way forward.

**Bambos Charalambous** (Enfield, Southgate) (Lab): I congratulate the Minister and wish her all the very best. I hope that she has a very safe delivery.

I echo colleagues' comments. There is a great deal of uncertainty at the moment. We want to try to move things forward. We are approaching the birthday of the Bill passing its Second Reading—it is nearly a year since we voted for it. There has been a fair bit of delay. Is there any way in which we can help to progress the drafting of the orders? Is there any way in which we can put pressure on the Government? We need to make a decision. It is unfair to keep meeting every Wednesday; it is not the best use of our time or that of staff. I wonder whether there is anything we can do about that. The Boundary Commission produce proposals in September and we need to get a move on. If there is anything that we as a Committee can do to help, I want to push this forward, if possible. In conclusion, I again congratulate the Minister.

**The Chair:** Does the Minister wish to respond?

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Cabinet Office (Chloe Smith):** Only to thank everybody, extremely briefly, for their kind wishes and to say what a pleasure it is to serve in such good company with such good humour.

*Question put and agreed to.*

10.5 am

*Adjourned till Wednesday 5 December at Ten o'clock.*