

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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OFFICIAL REPORT
GENERAL COMMITTEES

Public Bill Committee

HIGHER EDUCATION (FREEDOM OF SPEECH) BILL

Fourth Sitting

Monday 13 September 2021

(Evening)

CONTENTS

Examination of witnesses.

Adjourned till Wednesday 15 September at twenty-five minutes past
Nine o'clock.

Written evidence reported to the House.

No proofs can be supplied. Corrections that Members suggest for the final version of the report should be clearly marked in a copy of the report—not telephoned—and must be received in the Editor’s Room, House of Commons,

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Friday 17 September 2021

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The Committee consisted of the following Members:

Chairs: SIR CHRISTOPHER CHOPE, † JUDITH CUMMINS

† Bacon, Gareth (<i>Orpington</i>) (Con)	† Nichols, Charlotte (<i>Warrington North</i>) (Lab)
† Britcliffe, Sara (<i>Hyndburn</i>) (Con)	† Russell-Moyle, Lloyd (<i>Brighton, Kemptown</i>) (Lab/ Co-op)
† Bruce, Fiona (<i>Congleton</i>) (Con)	† Simmonds, David (<i>Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner</i>) (Con)
† Buchan, Felicity (<i>Kensington</i>) (Con)	† Tomlinson, Michael (<i>Lord Commissioner of Her Majesty's Treasury</i>)
† Donelan, Michelle (<i>Minister for Universities</i>)	Webb, Suzanne (<i>Stourbridge</i>) (Con)
† Glindon, Mary (<i>North Tyneside</i>) (Lab)	† Western, Matt (<i>Warwick and Leamington</i>) (Lab)
† Hardy, Emma (<i>Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle</i>) (Lab)	
† Hayes, Sir John (<i>South Holland and The Deepings</i>) (Con)	Kevin Maddison, Seb Newman, <i>Committee Clerks</i>
† Holden, Mr Richard (<i>North West Durham</i>) (Con)	
† Jones, Mr Kevan (<i>North Durham</i>) (Lab)	
† McDonnell, John (<i>Hayes and Harlington</i>) (Lab)	† attended the Committee

Witnesses:

Professor Paul Layzell, Principal of Royal Holloway, University of London and Chair of Universities UK Advisory Group on Free Speech and Academic Freedom

Professor Jonathan Grant, Professor of Public Policy, King's College London

Danny Stone MBE, Director, Antisemitism Policy Trust

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, Vice-President for Higher Education, National Union of Students

Public Bill Committee

Monday 13 September 2021

(Evening)

[JUDITH CUMMINS *in the Chair*]

Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Bill

5.30 pm

The Committee deliberated in private.

5.31 pm

Examination of Witnesses

Professor Paul Layzell and Professor Jonathan Grant gave evidence.

The Chair: We will now hear evidence from Professor Paul Layzell, principal of Royal Holloway, University of London, and chair of the Universities UK advisory group on free speech and academic freedom, and from Professor Jonathan Grant, professor of public policy at King's College London, who is joining us remotely via Zoom. We have until 6 o'clock for this session.

I ask the witnesses to please introduce yourselves for the record. Professor Layzell, will you start?

Professor Layzell: I am Professor Paul Layzell. I am principal of Royal Holloway, University of London, but I am here in my capacity as a board member of Universities UK and chair of the working group on freedom of speech.

Professor Grant: Good afternoon. I am Professor Jonathan Grant, professor of public policy at King's College, London. I used to be vice-principal for service, where I had some responsibility for the operationalisation around freedom of speech, although I should stress that today I am speaking in a personal capacity.

Q257 Matt Western (Warwick and Leamington) (Lab): Thank you, and welcome to the Committee. We really appreciate you joining us today, Professor Layzell and Professor Grant.

Given all the pressures and issues that universities are facing, is this Bill a priority for the higher education-sector? I put that question to Professor Layzell first.

Professor Layzell: Freedom of speech is a priority for the sector. It is an absolutely integral and fundamental part of what we are about. I cannot imagine that there is a vice-chancellor or board in the country that would not want to promote freedom of speech. As your previous witness said, there have been issues, and I think we recognise the commitment to bring forward legislation. For the universities sector, it must be proportionate and help to deal with complex situations. Vice-chancellors and their senior teams are concerned about the interplay of this legislation and other legislation. I think we have made some recommendations in our submission about ministerial statements that make clear the position of this legislation with respect to other duties. In addition, if the Office for Students was encouraged to work with us, we could work with it to develop a code of practice based on case studies and examples of dealing not with

the straightforward freedom of speech issues that are often cited, but with situations where a number of issues come together. If that helps decision making and brings transparency and clarity, it is welcome.

Q258 Matt Western: Do you think a tighter code of practice and guidelines from the OfS, maybe along the lines of the Chicago principles, could have achieved what you have just described, or do you think it needed something like a tort and this legislation?

Professor Layzell: I think that that would have gone a long way towards achieving the situation I have just described, but there are other things in the Bill on complaints systems and the requirement to positively promote freedom of speech that I do not think anybody in the sector would have a problem with.

Professor Grant: To answer your first question, I think it is somewhat overkill. That would be my overall assessment, but I think it conflates a number of issues, so it is a slightly more nuanced response. On the elements around cancel culture, when you look at the data it is very rare that events are cancelled or people get no-platformed. I have concerns around the chilling effect, which I heard previous witnesses talk about, but I wonder whether regulation is the way to address those concerns. There are elements that could do damage, but overall I am reasonably neutral about the Bill, albeit slightly cynical about whether it will achieve its objectives.

Q259 Matt Western: There is a lot of colourful language used such as "icebergs" and "extreme crisis". How do you think the views of students compare with those of wider society when it comes to freedom of speech?

Professor Grant: We know from the survey that we did a couple of years ago, where we went out and asked students exactly those questions, that 81% of students support free speech, 81% of students support a version of the Chicago principles, and the vast majority of students think that free speech is more likely to be challenged in broader society than in their universities, so the idea that students do not buy into the concept of free speech is an absolute red herring, in my view. As I said, that survey also demonstrated some quite worrying statistics around the concept of a chilling effect where people are self-censoring themselves in classrooms.

That for me is where the issue is. It is not about the process of inviting people on to campus and worrying about no-platforming and cancel culture. The data there says that it is a non-issue. If we could move our conversation from that issue on to the chilling effect and how we have a more open culture on campus where people of different views feel confident in expressing them, I think that would be a much more useful conversation.

Q260 Matt Western: Professor Layzell, many people have voiced concerns regarding the legislation as drafted. We heard from a witness last week, a lawyer, who really feared where it would take us in terms of litigation, and what will happen on university campuses, in student unions and so on. In your experience, given your position, can universities really afford the scale of the burden of bureaucracy, and the potential financial cost, of some of the claims that might get dragged into from certain speakers?

Professor Layzell: The first point to make is that it is important that the legal options that are being presented in the Bill do not cut across the existing mechanisms. There are plenty of mechanisms within universities to deal with complaints internally. There is other apparatus around employment tribunals and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education. Of course, we have the proposed OfS complaints scheme, so there is a lot of apparatus there.

What we want is something that ends up being proportionate and manageable. In our written submission, we suggested that there be a mechanism to prevent frivolous and vexatious claims. Completing internal processes, which we would be quite happy to operate, should be a condition before going to law. We would also recommend that the scope was limited to those who were directly affected by alleged breaches of freedom of speech. Our worry is that the apparatus gets used for other purposes. If it is framed carefully, we could avoid that. That is the thing that we would not want to waste our time on.

Q261 Matt Western: Do you think that academic freedom needs stronger definition?

Professor Layzell: I think the definition is fine. We have the concept of academic freedom of speech within the law already. This puts a nuance on it, but I think we are quite happy with the definition as it is.

Q262 Mr Kevan Jones (North Durham) (Lab): The problem with the Bill as it is written is that there is no stipulation that, per your very sensible suggestion, people would have to go through the internal complaints process first, which is the usual thing for ombudsmen and anything else. If we are not careful, we could end up with people resorting straight to law if they want to make a political point. That is going to cost the universities a lot. In some cases, they will settle just to get rid of them.

Professor Layzell: That is why you would want the full internal and existing apparatus to be fully utilised before we go into that final stage.

Q263 Mr Richard Holden (North West Durham) (Con): Professor Grant, I agree with your analysis that the bigger concern seems to be self-censorship, but we are a little unclear on the levels of evidence around this. Could you outline some of the evidence of self-censorship that you have seen? Is this something that affects you in your department at King's?

Professor Grant: This is one of those things that is really hard to get good evidence on. In the survey we did of 2,000 students, about a quarter said that they felt unable to express views in their university because they were nervous about disagreeing with their peers. That is a big number; if a quarter of the students in a class are nervous about expressing their views, that worries me. We then followed up that survey data through focus groups. In those groups, this was the issue that the students landed on. Focus groups are by definition small numbers so we need to treat some of this evidence carefully, but they were saying that they felt that reading lists in certain topics were biased to one view or another and were not balanced, and that lecturers quite often had some political view that they would express in the classroom, and if the students disagreed with that, they were nervous about expressing contrarian views in that context.

We followed that up with a focus group with a mix of vice-chancellors from the UK, Australia and the US. What was interesting for me was that when we put that evidence on the table, the response from the vice-chancellors was "We cannot tell our lecturers what to put on their reading list because that would breach academic freedom." What I find interesting in the Bill is that tension between the desire to promote free speech—and cool the chilling effect—and the concept of academic freedom, and how it is actually the academic who decides what to teach in the classroom. That is why I am not convinced that regulation or legislation is going to solve this. I think it is deeper: it is cultural, it is values-driven.

Q264 Mr Holden: But you do accept that legislation can help to lead that values change? Many academics have told us already today that the fact that this is being talked about in an open session in Parliament is helping lead to some of those conversations on campus.

Professor Grant: I entirely accept that. I am glad we are having the conversation and maybe the legislation has sparked us to have that conversation. What I wait to see—I cannot answer this; I am speculating—is whether the legislation will have an impact on that 25% of people who feel that they cannot say what they want to and whether it will change the behaviours of lecturers in the classroom to get more balanced reading lists. I hope that is the case, but we do not know at this stage. If this legislation leads to that, then it has been successful.

Q265 Mr Holden: So at the moment your view on the legislation is a wait-and-see approach—perhaps slightly moved from being opposed to it?

Professor Grant: Yes. As I said at the outset, I would distinguish two elements. The legislation around the so-called cancel culture piece is, to me, redundant. It is broadly a non-issue. I am much more interested in the issue I have just been talking about. It is a wait-and-see approach. I will be delighted if it works. I look forward to seeing that.

Q266 Mr Holden: Your emphasis has been on the student and their feeling of academic freedom, which is something that we have not discussed in as much depth as we have for the academics themselves. Do you get the feeling that some of the academics you work with also feel that they have to self-censor in what they are doing, or is that more on the student side in your experience?

Professor Grant: I am going to be very dull and say that we do not know, because I like to look at the research and evidence. I have looked to see how you would survey academics to ask the same questions that we ask the students, and from a purely methodological point of view, it is really difficult to do that, so I will sit on the fence for that question.

Q267 The Minister for Universities (Michelle Donelan): The Committee has heard evidence from a number of people who have said that their individual academic freedom, or that of their colleagues and, potentially, their students, has been restricted. Do you both acknowledge that that demonstrates that restrictions on freedom of speech in our universities are actually happening and are not a rare phenomenon?

Professor Layzell: Universities have a range of processes and procedures in place that protect and provide some protection against that. In my own institution, for example,

promotions and reward procedures are anonymised—we focus on the CVs and the evidence in front of us—so existing mechanisms provide a degree of protection. I cannot comment on individual cases. I can guess some of the individuals you are referring to, and they may well have had some experiences where they felt disadvantaged or adversely affected; we recognise that.

In addition, the wording in the Bill varies in different places. In some places it talks about “likelihood” and in others it talks about being “adversely affected”. In our submission, we have suggested that “adversely affected” is a better term and should be used consistently throughout the Bill.

Professor Grant: I am going to be boringly analytical again. There is no issue when it comes to the cancelling events. The numbers are small, as the OfS demonstrates. There is potentially an issue when it comes to this idea of self-censorship in the classroom, and I think that is a legitimate concern. As I just said, when it comes to academics, we do not know. It is inevitable that people who feel that they have had their freedom of speech inhibited will talk about that, but we do not know about all the other people who are not talking about it. We need to get the data. At this stage, I will say that you cannot answer that question on academics.

Q268 Michelle Donelan: I have just one more question. What more do you think universities could do to promote free speech?

Professor Grant: What we did at King’s was work with our student union in developing a joint statement modelled on the Chicago principles and signed by both the president of the student union and the president of King’s College London. On the back of that, we developed a committee that reviewed all so-called high-risk events. That committee was made up of equal numbers of university staff, academics and professional staff, and students. It made recommendations to the senior vice-principal for operations and, potentially, to the principal. In my mind, creating a sort of co-production and co-creation process around managing those events was deeply beneficial because, as the previous witness said, both sides started having conversations about the boundaries of what is and is not acceptable. Both groups then owned the process and the mitigations thereafter.

Professor Layzell: I think Universities UK would support what Professor Grant said. Many universities will have similar sorts of processes. I think one other step that could be taken—this comes under the promotion of free speech duty in the Bill—is to help students to better understand the role of university education. It is quite different from school and college. I think the concern that some students have about expressing a view is not necessarily about freedom of speech; it is about having the confidence to speak out and express an opinion.

I think we could do more to help students to understand how the university education process works and the role of freedom of speech and freedom of expression within that, in order to encourage them to have the confidence to express views that might be contrary to those of others in the room and to feel comfortable with that, and to help them understand that that is a normal part of how we do our business; that that is the lifeblood of academic research and teaching. I think we could do more in that respect.

Q269 Lloyd Russell-Moyle (Brighton, Kemptown) (Lab/Co-op): Jonathan Grant, I am interested in this chilling effect. Did you do any baseline studies on what the chilling effect was in other areas? I ask that because I have done some cursory searching. It is difficult to find, but Facebook has done some internal research and says that 71% of its users, even online, will censor what they say in order to meet the desires of friends and colleagues. Therefore, if that figure of 71% is about accurate—we do not know, because this could be a ballpark figure—a quarter of students is much lower than wider society, so is that an example of how universities are actually much better?

Professor Grant: That is an excellent question, and the short answer is no. When we did the survey, we went out to the general public and asked them a range of questions on their attitudes to free speech, and they were broadly the same as students, but we did not ask them that question about self-censorship, so I think it is an entirely legitimate question.

If I may, I just want to pick up on the previous comment, because I visited the University of Chicago a number of years ago, which had set up a programme to teach high school students about free speech, how to debate effectively and take contrarian views, and about the resilience needed to hear something challenging. I absolutely agree with Paul that in universities we could do more to help our students understand what debate is about, how at times it might be painful and the resilience needed to engage in some of that debate.

Q270 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: Thank you, and I totally agree with your point. I went to a comprehensive school, but we had a compulsory debating society every lunchtime, and we were required to take points that we disagreed with, which built resilience. Maybe we need to look at that at secondary school level in our comprehensive system.

Paul, I want to ask you about who takes responsibility for these duties. The Bill is quite unusual in putting the duty on both the institution and the student union, whereas the Education Act 1994 puts the responsibility only on the institution to require the student union. Does that duality of responsibility clarify the issue or, given that most student unions are probably using university premises and university money, does it muddy the question of who will then be responsible for reporting on these issues?

Professor Layzell: I think the existing position is ambiguous and difficult for the very reasons you mention. There is often a joint process going on. Universities are often responsible for health and safety, security and just managing a significant gathering, yet the event might be organised by the student union. I think that we get around that by having codes of practice and clear sets of responsibilities within institutions on who should be doing what, but it is a good point.

Q271 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: Jonathan Grant mentioned the joint committee that has been set up at King’s. Would something in the Act requiring institutions and student unions to create joint committees to look at this and assess freedom of speech be a better way forward than just having an external regulator?

Professor Layzell: I think we would be reluctant to over-specify the mechanics. Good relationships between universities and student unions are absolutely essential

to make this work. Encouraging that would be good, but as to specifying particular mechanisms or ways of doing it, we all work in slightly different ways and have slightly different student unions, so I think we would need some flexibility.

Q272 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: I have worked at both Sussex and Bradford in the past, so I understand that. Sometimes it seems that universities can be over-cautious, and act as small “c” conservatives about putting on events that might have risk attached. Will the Bill give universities more confidence about putting on events, or will it give them less confidence, because of the tort part, about initiating events?

The Chair: May I ask you to keep your answer brief, Professor Layzell, because two more members of the Committee have indicated that they want to speak?

Professor Layzell: There is a concern around the litigation and making both student unions and universities more risk averse, without the sort of protections that we put in our written submission.

Q273 David Simmonds (Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner) (Con): I want to push you on this point about the effectiveness of non-legislative measures and how we compare the norms in different environments. I am not entirely convinced that Facebook, which is essentially an unregulated environment, would have the same norms as you would find in a university and the world of academia. I am not entirely convinced by that analogy, although I understand the point. Both of you have mentioned training and things like anonymisation of promotion processes as a way of addressing the issue, but presumably if those things were entirely effective and consistent, we wouldn't be hearing the evidence about people suffering this chilling effect. Would you like to reflect on the effectiveness of those existing measures and any lessons that we as a Committee might need to take on board from what appears to be inconsistency in the way they operate?

Professor Layzell: As I said earlier, I think Universities UK would recognise that there have been cases where this approach has not worked as well as one would have wished. If the legislation is proportionate and does not create undesired side-effects such as more risk aversion, it may help to achieve a greater degree of consistency, but it is about keeping proportionality.

Q274 Emma Hardy (Kingston upon Hull West and Hessle) (Lab): Thank you for your evidence, which has been extremely interesting. I am going to ask similar questions to those I asked earlier about the director of freedom of speech. In the past few evidence sessions, we have heard varying opinions on who the director should be, how they should be appointed and what skills or knowledge they should have. In your evidence, you referred to

“the desirability of the preferred candidate having experience of either the higher education or legal sector.”

Why do you think that is desirable?

Professor Layzell: I think because the challenges that vice-chancellors feel they face arise when situations are complex. A simple black and white issue of saying yes or no is not where the problem is. It is the confluence of

a number of legal requirements that you need to get your head around. You have got to have that legal experience and/or experience of dealing with these sorts of situations in higher education. It would be wrong to think that these issues are very simple yes/no decisions; they are generally more complex.

Q275 Emma Hardy: I agree on complexity. In your evidence, you highlight where legislation must be taken into account: the public sector equality duty, the Equality Act 2010, the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and so on. The University of Cambridge has argued for a graduated system of sanctions. Is that something that Universities UK would support?

Professor Layzell: Sanctions against offences?

Emma Hardy: So if the director of free speech was making a judgment on something, they would have a range of sanctions available to them, rather than just going straight for a tort.

Professor Layzell: Again, we would want the sanctions to be proportionate. I think I would look at it in the context of us all wanting to do better in this space. I think we have heard a number of times that there have been issues, so sanctions that encourage greater consideration, greater thought and learning from one another would be appropriate.

Q276 Emma Hardy: In the Bill as it stands, there is no right to appeal the decision made by the director for freedom of speech. We have already heard that it could be a political appointment, as the chair of the Office for Students is right now. The director for freedom of speech is judge and jury over decisions over universities, and as it stands there is no right to appeal. Do you think that is right?

Professor Layzell: I think we would have a concern.

The Chair: If there are no further questions from Members, I thank the witnesses for their evidence.

Examination of Witnesses

Danny Stone MBE and Hillary Gyebi-Ababio gave evidence.

6 pm

Q277 The Chair: We will now hear oral evidence from Danny Stone MBE, director of the Antisemitism Policy Trust, and Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, vice-president for higher education at the National Union of Students. We have until 6.45 pm for this session. I ask the witnesses to introduce themselves for the record.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Thank you again for having me. I am Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, the vice-president for higher education at the National Union of Students, representing students here today.

Danny Stone: I am Danny Stone, the chief executive of the Antisemitism Policy Trust.

Q278 Matt Western: Thank you both for coming along this evening, and for the evidence that you submitted in advance. May I ask a couple of questions of you, Hillary, first? Perhaps then I can turn to you, Danny.

[*Matt Western*]

Just out of interest, Hillary, what are the current issues on campus among student unions? What are the priorities that you are facing?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: There is a plethora of issues that student unions are facing and that students are talking about right now, from mental health, which is a really serious issue that continues to pervade higher education, to funding and students not having enough money for accommodation and to live at university. Sexual violence is still prevalent on our campuses, and students are really going through it without enough support or enough measures for justice. Those are just a few, to not take up too much time. Students are going through a lot on campus right now, and seriously need solutions to problems that they are experiencing on the ground.

Q279 Matt Western: Student unions are feeding back to me that they are struggling financially. The past year and a half has been pretty tough. Incomes are right down, wherever they may be getting them from—some may be directly on campus, through facilities and so on. You may have seen that it is estimated that it will cost almost £800,000 a year for all SUs to sign off and distribute the codes of practice. How do you think that will go down with student unions? What impact will it have?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I think that will have a massive hit on student unions. For information, student unions are often funded through negotiations with parent institutions. That is how they get the bulk of their funding. Especially over the pandemic, student unions have been subject to so much lost from not being able to run their commercial services. Often student unions have bars, shops or discounted outlets for students to shop at and experience student life. Student unions, as a collective, spending almost £1 million every single year trying to abide by the Bill will reduce what they can do, at the root of it, which will stop them doing the already fantastic work that they do, facilitating events and a student life that is worth having, and representing students on all the issues that I spoke about earlier.

Q280 Matt Western: We just heard from Professor Grant of King's College London, who said that we have a very good system in place to address speech issues at events on campus. Do you find that currently it is working generally pretty well? Other than KCL, do you have any other examples where you know the process has been working?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I think it is commonplace that student unions and universities work together when it comes to events, to approving external speakers, and to ensuring that freedom of speech is facilitated on campus. You only have to look at the NSU calendar to see the wide range of events that are constantly going on, often led by students. A lot of that is facilitated by close relationships with universities. If there is an area on which universities and students work closely, it is that. There are measures in place; there are quite detailed ways that free speech is facilitated on campus through the partnership between student unions and universities. I think they are doing a good job in making that work. Where they need to improve, they are constantly eager to work together to do that.

Q281 Matt Western: Do you have concerns about some of our smaller higher education institutes? It is very easy to think about the big names, because they are the ones that always come up in the media, but in my few months in this role, I have begun to realise the scale of HE institutions that are covered. How do you think this will affect the hundreds of smaller institutions?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I think that is a really important question. If I am being completely honest, a lot of stuff in the Bill is really, really concerning, such as measures under which people could get monetary sanctions for breaches of freedom of speech. Not only will that involve lots of bureaucracy for universities and student unions to make sure they are complying with the Bill, but it will take away from their ability to freely and fairly facilitate freedom of speech on campus.

Those smaller institutions are often places where students try to share their views, beliefs and experiences in a really tight-knit way in quite close communities. The Bill runs the risk of making those specific institutions—alongside the whole sector—much more risk averse in running events and facilitating freedom of speech, simply because they cannot bear the amount that the Bill would put on them, in addition to the fact that they already have internal processes on which they have worked hard for years and years. We are really concerned about that and about the impact the Bill will have on such institutions, as well as on larger institutions and student unions.

Q282 Matt Western: Thank you. Danny, can you give us an overview of the current landscape of our universities and campuses? I am interested to hear specifically about the situation with regard to antisemitism. Can you give a flavour on that?

Danny Stone: Sure, and thank you for having me today. We have data: the Community Security Trust, which records antisemitic incident figures, reported that there were 58 university incidents in 2018-19, including four assaults; 65 incidents in 2019-20, including two assaults; and 109 incidents in 2020-21. We know that in May, issues occurred in universities where there had not previously been issues. Certainly, some of the abuse has moved online, and the Union of Jewish Students in particular has reported online abuse.

On the issue of speakers, which I suppose is of particular interest to the Committee, the CST reported that from 2018 to 2020, 15 speakers who had some association with antisemitism or had made antisemitic remarks in the past came on to campus. As a former officer of the Union of Jewish Students, I dealt with some of those cases. In 2005, at SOAS—the School of Oriental and African Studies—a speaker said:

“I'm not going to say whether it is right or not to burn down a synagogue, I can see that it is a rational act”.

Somebody who came to Oxford had actually been barred from entering the UK and was broadcast in. They had been barred because of their views on terrorism. In 2017, after the passing of the Equalities Act 2010, a speaker said:

“Zionists should be treated like Nazis”.

The point is that people are coming on to campus and expressing antisemitic views. The concern is that those impacts are being properly considered and that they do not get additional protections. As the trust, we have a couple of recommendations for the Bill, including

that the codes of practice that are drawn up and the complaints scheme appropriately address the complexities around legal harms and freedom of speech, which Sunder Katwala pointed out to you.

Q283 Matt Western: Finally, other legislation is quite clear in how it addresses and balances competing freedoms, but there is seemingly no such balance in this legislation. Can you expand on the importance of balancing competing freedoms on campus, particularly in a higher education setting?

Danny Stone: I learnt a lot about the balancing of freedoms from a guy called Ray Hill. He was a far-right mole who talked to me about the importance of not always shutting down debate. His experience of working with young people, particularly on the far right, was that opportunities to ask difficult questions and raise difficult issues should not be shut down. Equally, he acknowledged the harms caused by some people who express particular views in harmful ways.

This has been addressed in the higher education sector. Malcolm Grant did a report in 2010 in which he talked about trying to promote freedom of speech while understanding its limits. He said that universities need to balance the competing interests and might reach “different but equally legitimate conclusions about the same matters.”

The Prevent guidance that followed talked about freedom of speech and moral obligations to address harms. We have seen it in Government guidance from 2008 about free speech, which said that everyone can be safe and not intimidated at university.

In fact, the human rights memorandum for this Bill says that there will be competing freedoms, but it suggests leaving it to the end point: the universities. You have heard from people today who say, “Well, the universities aren’t getting it right.” My view is that it should be on the face of the Bill, per the Online Safety Bill, the Joint Committee on which I appeared before the other day. Recognition of the complexities and the competing freedoms would be welcome.

Q284 Michelle Donelan: Danny, you have previously raised concerns about a lack of consistency in the duties on higher education providers, in that they do not apply to student unions—something that this Bill would correct. Do you think that it is important that we do that?

Danny Stone: In terms of student unions? Absolutely. Again, if we are talking about complexities, there was a move to essentially prohibit the Jewish society at the University of Essex from becoming a society. That was unacceptable, and I believe it was reversed in the end. Similarly, there have been moves in the past to ban Jewish societies, and I was involved in campaigning against a motion at the University of Manchester that essentially would have done that.

On the flip side, there are front groups such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, which is not a proscribed organisation, that will seek to set up on campus, and there are far-right organisations that will seek to set up student societies on campus. That presents me with real concern. Could they potentially appeal and try to get money and find a route through? Yes, they might. There is a complexity in this which I would like to see recognised in the Bill. I would like to see something about the competing freedoms that exist.

Q285 Michelle Donelan: Do you think Jewish students feel comfortable reporting incidents where they may have had their freedom of speech inhibited?

Danny Stone: I think it depends on the institution and on how confident they might be. For example—I am sure we will come back to this—at the moment at Bristol, and potentially at Warwick, there have been concerns raised by the Union of Jewish Students about the operation of their procedures. In fact, I think the OfS may have taken a look at Warwick. It will depend, but I can well imagine there will be instances in which Jewish students would be nervous about reporting their concerns.

Q286 Michelle Donelan: Thank you. Hillary, in the past you have said that there is a freedom of speech problem on our campuses. Can you explain why you said that? Was it from personal experience?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Could you clarify where and when I said that, please?

Michelle Donelan: It is from one of the documents we have from a while ago.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Sure. I cannot recall exactly when I said that—apologies—but to speak to the background of the Bill, I think there are concerns around the evidence upon which this Bill has been brought about. If there is anything that we need to be worried about on campus, it is facilitating what would look like equitable free speech for everyone. Some students on campus do not feel that they have the same level of rights to free speech as others because, for example, existing legislation makes them nervous about speaking about their views or what they believe. In 2018, 43% of Muslim students, if I recall correctly, talked about the Prevent duty having an impact on their ability to feel—*[Interruption.]*

The Chair: Order. There is a Division. The sitting will be suspended, and I shall resume the Chair in 15 minutes’ time, just before half-past six o’clock.

6.14 pm

Sitting suspended for a Division in the House.

6.30 pm

On resuming—

The Chair: We resume the sitting, which will now end at 7 pm.

Q287 Charlotte Nichols (Warrington North) (Lab): I will direct my questions to Mr Stone. Earlier, Professor Goodwin said in evidence that he would happily have invited someone from the BNP or the National Front to speak to students, if they were available. He also spoke about the need for academics to feel welcome, safe and secure, but that does not seem to apply to students, in particular those from minority groups, including Jewish students. Under the proposals in the Bill, the OfS will have a specific condition of registration relating to the promotion of freedom of speech. Should it also have a condition in relation to discrimination?

Danny Stone: This is something that I wrote about when the OfS was first established. My view was, “Wouldn’t it be helpful if the OfS had a condition relating to discrimination?”, so that students could look to a regulator

and see whether there were particular things that their proposed institution was doing—or not doing. In the end, that was not included. The first ministerial guidance to the OfS suggested that it looked at discrimination. Since that point, it has been consulting on a sexual abuse and harassment procedure. It has put out a statement, which has gone to institutions, and institutions have had to respond on whether they comply—I assume that they have all said that they can comply. It strikes me, talking again about complexity, that the OfS, which already has certain principles that it must abide by in respect of freedom of speech, as Nicola Dandridge was saying, will now have a specific condition of registration, so this is the time to include a condition of registration in respect of discrimination. That then enables the OfS to look at the whole picture, ensuring that the complexity is properly reflected. Rather than it waiting for a non-legislative fix on discrimination, we have the balance brought all the way up. This is where I would do it, if I were putting the Bill together.

Q288 Charlotte Nichols: You referred to this earlier, so I am interested to know what you think that the Bill, if enacted, would mean for cases such as that of Professor David Miller at the University of Bristol? He has been widely condemned by the Union of Jewish Students, the Board of Deputies and more than 100 parliamentarians across both Houses of Parliament and all political parties regarding allegations of antisemitism. Would the Bill protect him?

Danny Stone: Before coming here, I had a look at the expertise that David Miller's professes on the Bristol website, which is the Zionist movement, the Israel lobby and racism. One can see, using the Miller case as an example, why that might present an issue in the future. If an academic has the right to protest that they have not got a promotion or have been passed over for a job because of free speech they have used in their area of expertise—well, hold on, the area of expertise here is Israel, Zionism and racism.

David Miller, however, has talked about Jewish students "being used as political pawns" by

"a violent, racist foreign regime engaged in ethnic cleansing."

Everyone, I think, recognises that that is an antisemitic statement. Certainly, as you say, across Parliament it has been recognised as such. There will be other examples of academics who have a particular area of expertise and that area of expertise will potentially give cover for them saying particular things. If you remove that, the problem is not fixed, because in the past other academics have spoken in an antisemitic way when those particulars are not their area of expertise.

Yes, that needs looking at, and those complexities need bringing out in the Bill. I do not necessarily have a particular suggestion, but I worry about it.

Q289 Charlotte Nichols: Hillary, is there anything you would like to add?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: It is important, especially in reference to your first question and whether we think about discrimination and what the Bill could allow for. First and foremost, the Bill needs to give stronger reassurances that will not allow for free rein on discrimination, especially of vulnerable groups. However, it is also really important that we recognise that there are students who are made

much more vulnerable by different types of speech than others, and unless the Bill recognises that they need protections and unless it can work alongside existing Acts and duties, it is going to make a lot of those students feel unsafe on campus—even more so than they do now with just their general experiences. I think that many elements of the Bill need to be looked at closely to ensure that that is embedded in there.

Q290 Sir John Hayes (South Holland and The Deepings) (Con): Further to the last point, speaking from a personal point of view and a NUS point of view, presumably you believe in freedom of speech in the sense that you believe in the freedom to disturb, to alarm, or even to shock or outrage.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Yes. As the NUS, we believe in freedom of speech.

Q291 Sir John Hayes: Even if that makes people feel very uncomfortable?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: What I would say is that to focus on freedom of speech as just being about making people uncomfortable is quite restrictive. If we are going to speak about freedom of speech in that regard, we also have to speak about the freedom of people to have opposing views and the right of people to protest when they do have opposing views. Even more so, I think it is important that when we think about freedom of speech, we acknowledge the fact that freedom of speech is important to have, to champion and to promote, but we also have to be mindful of where it might encroach into places where people feel harmed, and are harmed, especially if they come from a vulnerable or marginalised group with protected characteristics under the Equality Act.

Q292 Sir John Hayes: Of course, you are right that freedom of speech is unqualified in the sense that both views need to be put and many opinions need to be shared. There should be no prohibition on that within the law, and the law does prohibit incitement to hatred, incitement to terrorism and various other things, as you know. However, within those lawful constraints, is the freedom to offend important to you?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I would say to that that we could speak about the freedom to offend, but I think it is important that if we are so focused on offending rather than promoting an environment of debate in which people are able to voice opposing views, rather than just allow people to have the freedom to offend, I think we are not speaking about freedom of speech in the way that it should look like—in a balanced way, you know. If people should have the freedom to offend, people should also have the freedom to express opposing views, and to express that as freely as people would offend. Again, going back to the Bill, we cannot talk about this until there are proper reassurances that the Bill will not allow that freedom of offence to flirt with where it might encroach on hate speech or harmful speech, especially when people are from marginalised communities.

Q293 Sir John Hayes: Hang on, I want to be clear about this. I totally agree with you that there need to be plural opportunities for people to express their views. I may find those views entirely unacceptable, possibly shocking and maybe offensive, but I would defend

people's right to be able to express them. We have laws that protect against hatred, incitement to violence, incitement to terrorism and so on, so are we clear that what the Bill does is to allow pretty pervasive freedom of speech within the law, allowing all kinds of views to be articulated on campus? That is a good thing, surely.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Again, I would just reiterate that we believe in and champion freedom of speech on campus. It is not a secret that the NUS and the student movement have been facilitating this happening for years and years, so that is what I would say to that.

I think, though, that what the Bill proposes, and some of its elements, come across as finding ways to promote free speech by introducing a body to bring in punitive measures where that is inhibited. I think that does not give enough acknowledgement to the fact that there are already existing processes to ensure that, when free speech is inhibited, that is dealt with. There is already promotion of free speech by student unions, by universities and by the NUS, even, and we need to think about whether the Bill will have the effect of promoting free speech, or whether it will have an opposite effect that causes people to be very risk-averse.

Q294 Sir John Hayes: Very briefly, Chair—I know others want to speak—let me be clear. I am relieved and delighted by what you said about the NUS's position. So, the NUS is against no-platforming, it is against a list of proscribed speakers who can lawfully make their views known elsewhere, and it is basically in favour of a pretty permissive free speech policy across universities.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: If I may, that is not what I said exactly, especially in reference to the no-platforming policy. We have a no-platforming policy that includes six organisations, most of which the Government would also see as racist and fascist organisations. To say that we do not agree with no-platforming is simply not true.

Q295 Sir John Hayes: Are these lawful organisations? Are you saying that you are in favour, then, of prohibiting lawful free speech in certain circumstances?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: No. I am not saying that I am not in favour of lawful free speech. I am not saying that at all. What I am saying is that the NUS supports, champions and cares deeply that free speech is championed, enabled and supported. To say that we do not agree with no-platforming where there are organisation like those I referenced with NUS's no-platform policy that share and promote hate speech that hurts people from marginalised groups—to say that we do not support that is not true.

Q296 Emma Hardy: This is not just about free speech within the law. Conservative Members may not recall that the Minister wrote to universities asking them to adopt the definition of antisemitism. The Chair of the Education Committee has promoted, and asked universities to adopt, the definition of antisemitism. That definition is not law, so there are times when we want to restrict what people say that are not necessarily within the law. Do you want to comment on why adopting that definition is important, despite it not being law?

Danny Stone: There are two different issues here. Sir John, I found the your exchange earlier with Sunder Katwala really interesting because there are points in

society where we turn round and say, "Sorry, this isn't acceptable. There are societal standards here." We do that with Ofcom. We do it with the British Board of Film Classification in our film regulation. We do it in other areas of public life where we say there are some kind of limits. That does not mean that the speech cannot happen, but Parliament sets a standard and it allows regulators, for example, to have a say on those standards. That is why I think that the complexities I spoke to should be on the face of the Bill.

I am pleased to have the chance to talk about International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, so thank you. The IHRA definition is excellent and it was created—people may not know this—to try to bring uniformity for practitioners who were trying to understand why Jews were fleeing antisemitism and antisemitic terrorism in Europe. It helps to bring a standard of understanding to people. What it does not do—I disagree with Sunder's evidence earlier—is to block people from saying anything. It is an advisory tool. It helps people to understand what antisemitism may be in a particular context. That is a very useful thing for universities, and the Secretary of State and the Minister have been very good in supporting the IHRA definition. But, as you say, it does help to guide what our expectations are around antisemitism, and presumably, if something is found to be antisemitic, we do not really want that. There is a societal standard that we aspire to. Sorry for a long answer but, yes, I do think that these complexities need to be addressed in the Bill.

The Chair: I realise that these are very complex issues, but I ask Members and the panel to try to be succinct because we still have an awful lot of people who want to ask questions. I will try my level best to let everybody in.

Q297 Fiona Bruce (Congleton) (Con): Thank you both for coming today. Danny, you have given us some carefully collated data on antisemitism which has been very helpful, not just in relation to the Bill but more widely. What are your thoughts about faith-based views being expressed and how there may have been an impact on those in the university arena, including in terms of the chilling effect? The kind of views that I am talking about have perhaps not been mentioned in the witness sessions we have had so far, in which we have talked about the political spectrum of restrictions on freedom of speech. What about things like a biblical view of creation, pro-life views or a faith perspective on the meaning of marriage—or indeed having a faith at all? Could you comment on how those areas have been affected by the issues that we have been discussing?

Danny Stone: In truth, I do not have specific data on that.

Fiona Bruce: I would not expect you to.

Danny Stone: I would want to speak to, for example, the University Jewish Chaplaincy about that to understand what has happened. From my limited knowledge, I know that there are issues around exams on Jewish festivals, but I do not have much more. My general principle, as before, is that there has to be a right to offend. There has to be a right of freedom to express difficult, controversial opinions, but I am afraid that I do not have enough on the specifics for you.

Q298 Fiona Bruce: That is all right. Hillary, do you have any comments on students being freely able to express that kind of view within the university environment?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I do not necessarily know that it is for me to comment. I would reassert that freedom of speech is important, especially when there are views that offend or might alarm, but that has to be balanced by the ability of people who disagree to oppose and challenge those views. It is important that whenever we speak about freedom of speech there is balance. It is not just about allowing alarming views; it is about also allowing people who challenge and oppose those views to have the right to freedom of speech in an equal and equitable way.

Q299 Fiona Bruce: Thank you. A further short question, if I may. We have asked witnesses about the impact that they think not having the Bill would have on the university environment in 10 years' time. One witness said that there could be a monoculture or a lack of development of critical thinkers. I am really interested in what your impression is of the effect on wider society of not having the Bill, in 10 years' time when all the students who have experienced that environment are in positions of responsibility.

Danny Stone: It depends whether the Bill has the amendments in it that I have proposed or not—[*Laughter.*] The truth is that I do not know, but I can tell you that the Union of Jewish Students asked me to raise specifically that there has been disruption of where Jewish students who have a particular Zionist identity are looking to host Israeli speakers. Those talks, in numerous cases—I have 20 different examples in front of me—have been interrupted and the students have not been able, in their opinion, to host people with views that they want to be shared.

These are not controversial things; it is Israeli students and a group of Israeli minorities cancelled at short notice. There is a concern in that regard about being able to have a well thought through, rational and calm discussion about what is happening in the middle east, and whether that might be impacted. The UK Lawyers for Israel have raised that in front of the Joint Committee on Human Rights. I thought that concern might fit in answer to your question.

Q300 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: To follow up on that, I remember that when I was a student at the University of Bradford, I hosted a speaking tour of Zionist refuseniks—people who were proud Israelis and Zionists, but at the time were refusing to fight in the Israel Defence Forces. I remember the paperwork and bureaucracy required to host those young people from Israel at university, and to get them to speak about their experiences and how they, very importantly, were not anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist, but had disagreements on certain policies. It almost meant that some of the objectives did not happen. Is there a danger with some of this, particularly around tort, that universities will require even more paperwork and more thresholds that might mean that people such as myself in Bradford, who had a countervailing view at the time, might end up saying, “I can't be bothered to host that speaking tour”?

Danny Stone: I will give you another answer about complexities. In some instances, that bureaucracy can be helpful. We worked on the Manchester guidelines, which meant that when a speaker was coming to campus

it was advertised in a bar so that students could raise concerns if somebody was coming and they thought that there would be a problem. Then the university could put in place various measures to ensure that that talk went off without any problem. Perhaps the event was recorded; perhaps the speaker was asked to undertake to uphold the various principles that the university has or its requirements in respect of the public sector equality duty. Those things are helpful, so I do not think all bureaucracy is unhelpful, but I do not know yet; I suppose a lot will depend on how this is enacted and whether that may cause bureaucracy. Certainly as a student, the less paperwork I could fill in, the better.

Q301 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: I was on a panel at one event where there was—I do not think he is even a professor—the Miller chap from Bristol, and I remember that at the end of the event I said I think what has been said here is a load of rubbish—I think I was more fruity in my language. I told my office at the time to write a letter to him to say that I would not sit on any more panels and would not host any events with him. Is there a danger that if I were an institution and then wrote to Mr Miller with that, I would open myself up for tort liability, because I would be effectively saying, “I don't want to host your views anymore”? I can do that as an MP, but as a university I would be potentially liable to be sued.

Danny Stone: The truth is I do not know how this will play out. I do think there is a difference between people in public life being on panels and deciding their engagement with particular speakers—and institutions. I do think there is a qualitative difference. I do not know—it may very well. That is why, in all these cases, whether it be in relation to the director of freedom of speech for the OfS, the code of practice or anything else, that balance and the reference to complexity and competing freedoms will be hugely important in trying to get the balance right.

Q302 Lloyd Russell-Moyle: Hillary, you always get—and it is fantastic—some contrary students in student unions, who want to rock the boat. That is basically the point of a student union, under the Education Act 1994 and case law—*v. Brady* and others, for example. But is there a difficulty with this, particularly, that there might be a reverse chilling effect, and that rather than allowing students to invite whomever they want and then doing as Danny says and seeing whether there can be a process to ensure that things are followed, some student unions just go down the course of saying, “You can't invite in anyone, because we don't want to breach”—

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: That is an important concern to raise: the inadvertent or indirect—well, I do not even know whether it is indirect. I think a direct unintended consequence of this Bill could be that student unions would become more risk averse to inviting speakers, because they just cannot handle the bureaucracy; they just cannot handle the prospect of having to pay lots of money in the case of litigation. They are having to worry about doing what they already do well and facilitate very well, in a way that is much more complicated and adds so many more layers of process to what they already do very well, in order not to face the consequences of this Bill. If we are going to think about bringing student unions into this duty, we have to think about

the fact that they already have regulators, regulations and provisions to make sure that freedom of speech is facilitated well and strongly on campus. I think that is a legitimate direct consequence that this Bill could create for student unions—not least the £800,000 a year in printing and signing off the code of practice.

Q303 Mr Holden: My first question is to Mr Stone. I just wanted to pick up on something that we got evidence on earlier, which was that about 20% of students are apparently feeling unable to express their views in the classroom. I just wondered whether there were any specifics around Jewish students, given what you had said about the UJS having difficulty with people coming on campus.

Danny Stone: As I say, there have been various Israeli speakers that they have sought to have on campus, including a professor of international law at City University in 2015—cancelled. In 2018 it was the Israeli ambassador; the event was initially cancelled and then held after a legal threat. There is a suggestion by a law lecturer at City University that they had been refused a sabbatical for attending a law conference in Israel. For Israeli minorities that I spoke to, events were cancelled at short notice and held off campus, because the SU imposed charges. This is actually something fairly important; it has happened a number of times—student societies being asked to pay a fee to cover the security costs of an event going ahead.

Q304 Mr Holden: Did you study under Professor Matthew Goodwin when you were at Birkbeck for your master's programme?

Danny Stone: No, I did not.

Q305 Mr Holden: He raised a particular concern around academic freedom and the lack of voices from certain points of the political establishment. Do you find that that is also an issue that Jewish academics face?

Danny Stone: There are anecdotal examples of Jewish academics who have felt that they have been passed over for a promotion, or that they have not necessarily had the support that they thought they should have for speaking about antisemitism. On the flip side, as I pointed to before, I know that there are academics who have expressed antisemitic views, and we have significant concerns about that. One that I spotted today—this points to the earlier discussion about conspiracy theories—had a conspiracy theory on their personal website, which is linked to the university website. It is complex. There are issues there. The Jewish community is like the rest of the world, and will experience the same issues that others face.

Q306 Mr Holden: Miss Gyebi-Ababio, we had evidence from Kathleen Stock, from the University of Sussex, about her concerns around academic freedom. One of the things that you mentioned earlier was that you want to believe in and champion freedom of speech, and that is what the NUS does. Would that extend as far as people like Kathleen Stock, who push gender-critical thinking?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I do not think it is necessarily my place to say who is and is not okay to speak on campus. I would say that there are frameworks in place to facilitate people with views that might be viewed as

controversial or unpopular to be able to speak on campus. Those are already in place and already happening. I think it is important that, where freedom of speech is championed, we are trusting in the existing processes that are facilitating that already.

I think that this Bill puts in place undue measures, in an excessive way, to solve something that just has not been proven to be widespread. The data released by the OfS last week shows it. When 0.002% of events were cancelled—that is under 100 of the 43,000 events that were reported for them to look at—free speech is already being facilitated on campus, and universities and student unions are doing it well. Again, as I said at the start, they are learning as they go. They are continuing to learn and continuing to improve their procedures, and doing that really well.

Q307 Mr Holden: One of the issues that has been raised, rather than this direct cancelling of events, which Mr Stone has spoken to, is also the self-censorship: people not inviting people, and that sort of thing. I believe you are here on behalf of the NUS, at least in some part. I just wanted to raise something—a term called TERFs, or trans-exclusionary radical feminists. I am just looking at the NUS website now, from June this year, and it says, basically, that “the gender-critical perspective” is essentially “trying to rebrand” people who are “just...hateful bigots”. Do you agree with that?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: It is important that NUS is able to express its views and opinions, just as we champion the right for people to be able to express their own. That is us exercising our freedom of speech in challenging a view that we do not agree with. I do not know how that necessarily speaks to the Bill, but again, I want to reiterate that this Bill does some really important stuff in promoting free speech, but it does not offer enough—

The Chair: I am sorry to interrupt, but I am afraid we are running out of time, and we have one more question to take. It will have to be the last question of the day.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: I was just finishing the sentence.

The Chair: Okay. I call David Simmonds.

Q308 David Simmonds: I thank Danny for his comments about the usefulness of the IHRA definition. A brief question for Hillary: you said in a number of your responses that there are a lot of things in the Bill that need to be closely scrutinised; luckily, the purpose of this Committee is to ensure that scrutiny. Can you say specifically which points in the Bill the NUS wishes to express a view about, and how you feel the Bill should change in the light of the NUS's point of view?

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio: Hopefully you will have seen our amendments, so to save time I will not repeat them. All our amendments cover the fact that there are confusing regulatory positions in the Bill, which add regulation to a sector and a space that are already regulated quite well. It is concerning, in that the Bill will cause chaos and confusion for students and academics alike, I imagine. There is not a lot of clarity around the measures. I have spoken a lot about the disproportionate financial impact that they will have on student unions. They do not show a preparedness to be transparent and accountable in relation to the Director for Freedom of Speech, and

more generally in how the regulatory framework will work. Again, as I said—and this speaks to the last question I was answering—there is not enough reassurance—

The Chair: Order. I am afraid that brings us to the end of the time allocated for the Committee to ask questions of this panel. I thank the witnesses on behalf of the Committee for their evidence. I invite any member of the Committee who wishes to register an interest to do so now.

Sir John Hayes: As I did previously, I refer to my entry in the Register of Members' Financial Interests relating to my role at the University of Bolton.

Mr Holden: I declare an interest as the vice-chair of the all-party parliamentary group on Durham University.

David Simmonds: I am an honorary fellow of Birkbeck College.

John McDonnell (Hayes and Harlington) (Lab): Ditto.

Lloyd Russell-Moyle: As I mentioned in the previous sitting, I am a trustee at the University of Bradford union, I receive money from the University of Sussex to provide educational opportunities to its students, and I have received support from the University and College Union.

Matt Western: My wife works at a higher education provider.

Ordered, That further consideration be now adjourned.—(Michael Tomlinson.)

7.2 pm

Adjourned till Wednesday 15 September at twenty-five minutes past Nine o'clock.

Written evidence reported to the House

HEFSB10 Free Churches Group of England and Wales

HEFSB11 Professor Kathleen Stock OBE, Philosophy,
University of Sussex

HEFSB12 Dr David Renton, barrister, and Prof Alison
Scott-Baumann, SOAS, SOAS ICOP project

HEFSB13 The Russell Group

HEFSB14 Executive Committee of Beds SU, University
of Bedfordshire

HEFSB15 George Sullivan, Union Development Officer,
The University of Nottingham Students' Union

HEFSB16 Sheffield Hallam University

HEFSB17 Professor Eric Kaufmann, Professor of Politics,
Birkbeck College, University of London

HEFSB18 National Union of Students UK and the
National Union of Students Charity

HEFSB19 Smita Jamdar, Partner & Head of Education,
Shakespeare Martineau (supplementary)

