



HOUSE OF LORDS

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The Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
Ministry of Justice
SW1H 9AJ

2 November 2022

Dear Lord Chancellor,

I am writing to you about strategic litigation against public participation (SLAPPs) and free speech.

As you are aware, SLAPP lawsuits typically involve wealthy people, large businesses or institutions using the threat of legal action to pressure their opponents. My committee took evidence from those affected by these egregious practices and wrote to you in April 2022 to emphasise the importance of tackling this issue.

I very much welcome the Government's commitment to bringing forward legislative changes to tackle SLAPPs. The proposals for an early dismissal mechanism and costs protection scheme are an important step in the right direction.

I would be grateful for clarity on the Government's timeline for introducing these measures. Every day that passes leaves journalists and authors exposed to intimidatory practices. I note recent suggestions to attach measures to existing Bills. If this proves to be unfeasible, I urge you to bring forward new legislative proposals containing a comprehensive set of measures at the earliest opportunity.

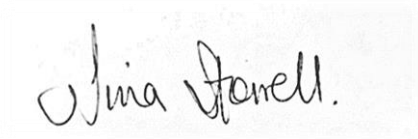
I appreciate the need to consider these issues carefully given the legal complexities, and that this takes time. I therefore encourage you to explore wider options for introducing support measures for those affected by SLAPP cases in the meantime. This could involve working with industry partners, or providing more targeted support through the National Action Plan for the Safety of Journalists.

I would be grateful if you could respond by December 1st setting out the Government's legislative timeline; and plans to provide greater support to those affected by SLAPPs ahead of introducing legislative changes.

I hope you agree that the Government must act to safeguard the freedom of speech and investigative journalism which play such a vital role in our democratic system.

I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Stowell." The signature is written in a cursive style and is centered within a light gray rectangular box.

BARONESS STOWELL