



Lord Speaker

The Rt Hon. the Lord McFall of Alcluith

Sir Chris Bryant MP
House of Commons
SW1A 0AA

25 May 2023

Dear Chris

I write following publication, on 5 April, of the Standards Committee report setting out final proposals for the regulation of All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs). I am grateful for the attention that you and your colleagues have given to this matter. There is much to be welcomed within the report, and I was particularly pleased to see that a number of your recommendations reflected proposals advanced by myself and Mr Speaker.

I believe that paragraph 17 of your report, which would prohibit foreign governments from providing or funding the secretariat of an APPG, is of particular importance. It is, however, the case that the potential for foreign influence or interference in the operation of these groups is not limited solely to direct funding by governments. You may wish to give further consideration, in due course, to addressing the possibility of indirect funding by foreign states, including through proxy organisations and third-parties.

I note your recommendation, at paragraph 19, that the House of Commons Administration Committee should make it explicit that nobody registered as an external secretariat to a Group should be granted a parliamentary pass. I should emphasise that the House of Lords already has a similar provision in place. Amended rules for the provision of members staff passes, agreed by the House in 2020, include the stipulation that "Members may not sponsor a pass for anybody whose primary role is to support an All-Party Parliamentary Group". The provision and usage of members staff passes is regularly reviewed by the Registrar of Lords' Interests.

I understand that your Committee will be meeting the House of Lords Conduct Committee shortly, to discuss APPGs among other things. I am sure that the Conduct Committee will give careful consideration to the suggestion that Lords members who are APPG officers should explicitly be required to observe the APPG rules.

I hope that this brief letter is helpful as you continue to take this important work forward.

Warmest Regards

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