



LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF LORDS
HOUSE OF LORDS
LONDON SW1A 0PW

The Baroness Drake CBE
Chair of the Lords Constitution Committee
House of Lords

5th August 2024

Dear Jeanie

Dear ~~Baroness~~ Drake,

I am writing to inform you that the House of Lords (Hereditary Peers) Bill has been introduced and received its First Reading in the House of Commons today. This Bill will remove the right of the remaining hereditary peers to sit and vote in the Lords. While the Government recognises the good work of hereditary peers who scrutinise the government of the day and improve the quality of legislation, reform is long overdue and essential.

The House of Lords Act 1999 removed the right of most hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords. The original intention was to remove all hereditary peers from the Lords, but under a cross party agreement 90 hereditary peers were excepted from this, as well as the hereditary peers holding the offices of the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain.

This Bill will repeal the exception, and at the end of the session the remaining hereditary peers will no longer have the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords. Although they will no longer be members of the House, the Bill will not affect the ability of the Earl Marshal and Lord Great Chamberlain to carry out their respective ceremonial duties.

As the Bill removes the final link between hereditary peerage and membership of the House, the Bill will also abolish the House of Lords' role in considering peerage claims. These

claims will now be considered by the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council under section 4 of the Judicial Committee Act 1833.

Such reform is long overdue - in the 21st Century there should not be places in the Lords reserved for those who were born into certain families.

This is the first step in delivering a House of Lords that better reflects the country it serves. The Government is committed to bringing about reform across Parliament and in particular with the upper Chamber so it can be fairer and more representative of the people it serves.

As I have said I am committed to a dialogue with the House on these issues and I very much look forward to working with you and the Committee throughout the passage of this Bill.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Siobhán', written in a cursive style.

The Baroness Smith of Basildon
Leader of the House of Lords