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Committee Stage of the Repeal Bill

Thank you for contacting me about the Committee Stage of the Repeal Bill.

In the referendum, millions of people voted to leave the EU. The EU (Withdrawal) Bill, also known as the Repeal Bill, ensures that the UK does this in the smoothest possible way and this is why I support it. This Bill is not about whether we leave the EU or about the terms of our exit.

The Bill honours the referendum result and provides certainty for businesses. It repeals the European Communities Act 1972, which gives effect to EU law in the UK, and converts all EU law into UK law. It also provides ministers in the UK Government and in the devolved administrations with temporary powers to make corrections to the law. Without it there would be holes in our legal system and chaos for the British people.

The delegated power is important because not all laws will make sense after the UK leaves the EU. For example, references to the UK as a member of the EU will have to be removed and temporary delegated powers will allow ministers to do this in time for the UK's departure. I do not believe that it would be sensible for MPs to debate such changes every time they arise.

The Bill does not, however, allow the Government to bypass Parliament. MPs will still be able to scrutinise any changes introduced by ministers using delegated powers and major policy changes will be introduced as separate Bills. The Queen's Speech announced legislation on agriculture, immigration and trade. Future laws will be made in London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast.

The Repeal Bill is receiving 8 days of debate in the House of Commons to discuss amendments tabled by MPs. This is more than the previous Labour Government provided for the Lisbon Treaty which was similar in its constitutional importance. The Government has said that further time may be considered if necessary.

The Prime Minister has promised that Parliament will have a say over the final withdrawal deal but it is not within the Government's power to unilaterally extend the negotiation period for further discussions. EU law is clear that the UK will leave the EU in March 2019 whether or not a withdrawal agreement is reached. By voting for this Bill, the UK will leave the EU in a smooth and orderly way. Voting against the Bill would create chaos and uncertainty.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP