



## Craig Whittaker MP

CALDER VALLEY

[www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk](http://www.craigwhittakermp.co.uk)

### **Approving the EU Withdrawal Bill**

Thank you for contacting me about the process for approval of the final terms for leaving the EU.

The Prime Minister has been clear that there must be no attempts to remain inside the EU, no attempts to rejoin it through the back door, and no second referendum. Turnout was larger than at any election since 1992 and no Prime Minister or party in British history has ever received as many votes as the vote to leave did.

The Withdrawal Bill is intended to implement the withdrawal agreement so that the deal that the UK reaches with the EU can be put directly into UK domestic law. This includes the agreement reached on citizens' rights, any financial settlement and the implementation period. 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.

This also means that Members of Parliament in the House of Commons and Members of the House of Lords are able to debate, scrutinise and vote on the final agreement made with the EU. The commitment provided to both Houses of Parliament that they will have a meaningful vote on the final deal will not be affected. This will take place as soon as the deal agreed and before the European Parliament votes on it. There can be no doubt that Parliament will have a full opportunity to have its say on the final agreement.

Powers in the EU (Withdrawal) Bill will, if necessary, be used to make more technical changes that are appropriate for secondary legislation. It 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 received 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 Bill is now being scrutinised in the House of Lords.

The exact details of the UK's withdrawal arrangements are still subject to negotiation with the EU, which is why it is important to press ahead with the EU (Withdrawal) Bill and ensure that the UK's exit is delivered in a smooth and orderly way.

The Government has listened and will continue to listen to suggestions from Members of Parliament to improve the legislation relating to the UK's exit from the EU. Legislators should work together to ensure that the UK can pursue a smooth and stable exit from the EU. This is in everyone's interest.

Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty has been invoked and there is a two year period in which to agree a withdrawal deal. EU law is clear that if a withdrawal agreement is not reached by the end of this period, the withdrawing country will simply leave the EU without any deal.

It is also not within the power of the UK Government to unilaterally extend the negotiating period. EU law states that this period can only be extended with the unanimous agreement of the remaining member states of the EU and it may well not be in the gift of the Government to fulfil it.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Craig Whittaker', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Craig Whittaker MP