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From: K MacMillan
Sent: 27 April 2009 23:10
To: Inquiry
Subject: suggestions and views from a member of the general public.

Dear sir/madam,

I was particularly infuriated to learn that Gordon brown was seeking to make the allowance for MP's to claim on their second home on a daily basis. I am a Student President, and understand that whilst my job is not quite so vast as running the country might be; it still works on the same principles. I was astounded that I am paid via charity honorarium, and the amount of tax I pay in one month is the same amount as Gordon Brown wanted to give out as a daily allowance...I feel that a better way to spend the public's money would be to put it towards the NHS or the education system - or by trying to pull the country out of the economic crisis. I find myself questioning the clause that MP's have about not spending taxpayers money on personal financial gain...At any rate, a few of my students and myself have had a revision of the paper your committee has put forward and would like the opportunity to add our voices to the mix.

- The internal and external audit that is taking place at the start of this financial year should be backdated for the last few years. We are also concerned (in general) about the transparency of the expenses system, and believe that the results of this audit (no matter how controversial) should be made publicly available.
- MP's should not be allowed to vote on their own pay increases - as part of the charity I currently belong to only outgoing members of the board are allowed a vote on the increase of sabbatical salaries, and this (or something similar) should be implemented throughout parliament. It was also suggested that the Salaries of MP's should be open to referendum, or that a cross-section of the public should be set up in a Committee who should decide such things...This is a democracy after all.
- Perhaps instead of receiving funding for a 'second home' the Parliament should invest in a solitary set of residences that would accommodate for them whilst they have to stay in central London. Would it even be cheaper to put them in a hotel if they are only going to be there a night or two? We cannot justify that they get paid to run a second home when we, as students of course, have to scrimp and save to be able to rent a single one.
- Any expenses claims should be ratified by two other MP's (at least). MP's should not be able to design their own expenses budgets nor sign off their own claims.
- Any increases in basic pay should be voted for or decided out with Parliament, some of the students further felt that they should receive a reduction considering the current economic climate.
- Receipts should be shown for absolutely everything that is to be claimed back. If there is no receipt then the expenses should not be granted. The taxpayers money belongs to the taxpayers - and every single penny should be accounted for. It is purely unacceptable that we are in a recession and there seems to be a lack of clearly defined regulations which govern this.

The Government should be seeking complete transparency in all expenses matters, we, as members of the General public, feel that the current situation is not helpful in promoting democracy.

I appreciate that you are running this enquiry and that you have taken the time to consider our response. I trust that the investigation will be thorough and look forward to the findings!

Miss K MacMillan BA(hons)

Campus President, Ayr
Student's Association of the University of the West of Scotland

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