

Bob Spink MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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13 JUL 2009

Sir Christopher Kelly KCB
Chair of Committee on Standard in Public Life
35 Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BQ

7 July 2009

Dear Christopher,

MP's pay and allowances

I am very grateful to you for your help in reviewing Member's allowances and pay in a totally independent manner, something I have been calling for over many years.

I enclose copy of my Early Day Motions from last year and this, which are self explanatory and set out my views very briefly.

Resettlement help on leaving office should continue but the system should be changed to reflect the total year's service rather than the arbitrary and unfair system of age and years which currently exists. The SSRB Recommendation 30 is a good starting point.

I subsidize my work flat, which is in County Hall just across the bridge from Westminster, by around 50%. Over the 4 year period, 2004-2008 I paid mortgage interest of around £50,000 but only claimed £28,000 on my allowance and I subsidized refurbishment work and furnishings and other costs myself. Of course, this would affect any splitting of capital gains between myself and the State. If the State sought to share any capital gain, it should equally pick up its share of any loss were property prices to fall further. Any furnishings purchased with allowances will be offered to the State when I leave office.

You will see from my Early Day Motions that I have long believed that the House, rather than MPs, should be the formal employer of all MPs' staff.

A constituency limit of 200 miles per month does not cover my local travel. I am not able to record the mileage of every journey without disproportionate work and inconvenience. However when I did this to check my mileage, I used the 200 miles in the first 2 weeks. Therefore I have to subsidize my work travel as an alternative to cutting down my visits to schools, constituents, etc which I am not prepared to do. This seems to me improper and unfair.

The restriction on use of franked envelopes imposes additional work on my staff and is unreasonable and petty. Good MP's who are working hard for their constituents should not be penalized because a few MPs have in the past abused the system, there are other ways to control such matters.

I have used a house in my constituency which I own, 75 Downer Road, Benfleet, as an office for 8 years. This saves the public purse around £15,000 per year which I would have to pay in rent, utilities, etc were I to hire an office in Benfleet. I am however restricted to only 25% of utility bills even though my constituency office is the main and often the only use I make of that property. In total confidence, I live in another house within my constituency. Therefore I subsidize my working office and the '25% utility bills only' ruling does not reflect the work costs I incur.

Second jobs should be totally banned. Failing this, the total gross aggregated remuneration for all additional jobs should be limited to a maximum of 10% of the MP's basic salary. Second job remuneration seems to me to be mostly a surrogate way for organisations to purchase influence. If MPs wish to get in touch they can do so by visiting and working with firms or meeting their constituents, visiting schools and hospitals and charities etc. They do not achieve this by sitting in board rooms and do not need to be paid again for keeping in touch which is part of their job as an MP.

I would be pleased to give evidence to your committee if you felt that appropriate and may I thank you for considering the points that I have raised.

Yours ever,

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

Bob Spink MP

EDM 1767

[Printable EDM](#)

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LEGAL SANCTIONS ON HON. MEMBERS

29.06.2009

Spink, Bob

That this House notes with concern proposals to remove proposed legal sanctions on hon. Members who wilfully and seriously transgress the rules on expenses claims, registration of interests and paid advocacy; believes that hon. Members should be honest and if they are not, should be subject to the same legal sanctions as the people they are elected to represent; and urges the Conservative Party and all hon. Members to take account of public opinion and support legal sanctions in such cases.

EDM 819

[Printable EDM](#)

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HON. MEMBERS' OFFICE AND PAY ARRANGEMENTS

23.02.2009

Spink, Bob

That this House notes that public trust in political parties and in Parliament remains at an historically low level notwithstanding recent changes to make hon. Member's expenses more transparent; believes these changes fall short of the root and branch modernisation of the way hon. Members are remunerated, organise staff and pay for their essential work and offices; further believes that hon. Members should get no expenses at all, excepting essential job travel at cost; further believes that hon. Members are paid to do a full-time job and should not have substantial additional paid employment, but should be paid an appropriate salary to fund their essential work as a Member of Parliament, including keeping accommodation in London where necessary; further believes that hon. Members should not decide or vote on their own terms and conditions of employment; further notes that it is inappropriate for hon. Members to maintain 646 separate small businesses in the House; further believes that staff, communications and office costs should be met directly by the Department of Resources, which should be the formal employer of all hon. Members' staff, and that, in consultation with each hon. Member, the Department of Resources must engage only a person who is qualified for the job; and further believes that this over-arching modernisation should be implemented as soon as possible so the House can get on with its job of holding the Executive to account, defending the country and democracy, and assisting people who need help.

EDM 838

Printable EDM

Signatures

HON. MEMBERS' OFFICE AND PAY ARRANGEMENTS

31.01.2008

Spink, Bob

That this House should undertake root and branch modernisation of the way hon. Members organise, staff and pay for their offices and how they are remunerated for carrying out their various duties; believes that hon. Members should get no expenses at all, excepting essential job travel at cost; further believes that hon. Members are paid for a full-time job and should be prevented from having substantial additional employment but should be paid an appropriate salary to fund approved working practices, including keeping accommodation in London where necessary; further believes that hon. Members in the future should have no say whatsoever on the level of their own salaries, that staffing, communications and office costs should be met entirely and directly by the Fees Office which should be the employer of all hon. Members' staff, and that, in consultation with hon. Members, the Fees Office must be allowed to employ the best person for the job, and must only employ people who are appropriately qualified; further believes that it would deliver greater visibility and accessibility for the public, for there to be a single register rather than the separate Parliamentary and Electoral Commission registers; and further believes that this overarching modernisation should be considered as soon as possible, so the House can get on with its job of defending the country and democracy and assisting people who need help.