

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GINA MILLER'S RESPONSE TO THE GORDON BROWN REPORT

5 December 2022: Our machinery of government and largely unwritten constitution need serious reforms to be more efficient and effective, accountable and trusted, and to work for the people not politicians.

I welcome today's long-awaited report by Gordon Brown into constitutional reform. It is, however, disappointing that the report is more utopian than utilitarian, with significant flaws, such as a lack of proposals to tackle the most heinous behaviours in Westminster. We need solutions to strengthen the systemic failures in our politics, such as putting robust laws, processes and procedures in place.

As a new 'campaigning' party True & Fair is not invested in the status quo and believes we must build cross-party consensus for constitutional reform to enable the effective overhaul of parliament.

There are, in particular, two failings in Labour's focus and response that undermine the urgency to modernise our democracy.

1. House of Commons reform must be the priority

A reform agenda that focuses so heavily on the House of Lords, without serious change to the House of Commons, is mere tinkering.

The corruption, cronyism and lack of accountability across our machinery of government is plain for all to see. Only 35% of the UK population state that they trust national government, lower than the OECD average. It is easy to see why. A system in which a Prime Minister can close down an inconvenient parliament, then bring in revenge laws to limit actions against them, is clearly deficient. A system in which a Prime Minister can take power from the courts is an insult to all of us who abide by rules and regulations.

It is much more urgent for all parties to pursue proportional representation; put the Cabinet Manual (including the Ministerial Code) on a statutory basis; and create an independent non-parliamentary body to advise on constitutional issues.

2. Practical House of Lords reform

There is no dispute that the House of Lords needs reforming.

Our concern is that by focusing on such fundamental change without a timetable, Sir Keir Starmer will fail to make any reforms at all. Already, he cannot give a straight answer as to whether this is a first or second term priority.

True & Fair's reform proposals for the Upper Chamber are practical, pragmatic and actionable in one parliamentary term. They include:

- Reducing the House of Lords to 400 members. Currently there are around 800 peers who are eligible to take part in the House of Lords, many of whom simply clock in and out for their £332 attendance allowance. This is a ludicrously unwieldy number - the largest upper chamber in any democracy, only surpassed by China. There are only some 400 seats in the Chamber, it is logical and prudent to have 400 active peers who can be accommodated at any one time.
- No member of the House of Lords to sit longer than 10 years. Becoming a peer is an honour, it should not be a job for life.
- Abolition of hereditary peers. Members of the House of Lords should be appointed on merit. What is important is their expertise, not their mum or dad. There can be no entitlement when the country needs the best and brightest.



- Prime Ministers who lose confidence votes must not be allowed to make honours nominations. This is a straightforward way of making sure the Honours List does not become a reward or consolation for executive failure.
- A minimum one year of service as Prime Minister to qualify for an Honours List. It is clearly inappropriate for anyone who enters and leaves Number 10 in a matter of months, weeks or even days to reward those who briefly supported them. A minimum length of service before being allowed to make those nominations would restore public faith in the system.
- The quality of the Honours List must be more strictly scrutinised. Merely making donations to party offices or lending Prime Ministers their holiday homes are not reasons to be nominated for a peerage.
- The Prime Minister should not set the strategic direction for each Honours List. Recognition guidance for Honour's List should be independently agreed and codified.

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Notes to editors:

True & Fair Party

The True & Fair Party was launched by Gina Miller earlier this year to tackle political corruption and campaign for the modernisation of UK democracy. Policies include:

- **Political reform** - A legally binding 'oath of office' for MPs; compulsory parliamentary sitting for 40 weeks a year; removing hereditary peers from the House of Lords.
- **Electoral reform** - Introduction of proportional representation; introduction of automatic voter registration to improve representation; digital voting.
- **Anti-corruption** - Establishment of an Economic Crime Unit to tackle crime that costs the UK at least £290bn a year; a Transparency Law for overseas firms owning UK property; ban on paid lobbying by MPs.
- **Economy** - Bounce back loans to be written off for the three million SMEs excluded from support during the Covid pandemic; tenants to no longer pay business rates; National Insurance rolled into income tax to help lower earners.

True & Fair Party policies can be found [here](#)