

Ruth pays tribute to Sir Teddy Taylor

21 Sep 2017



Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson has paid tribute to former MP Sir Teddy Taylor, whose death was announced today.

The 80-year-old represented Glasgow Cathcart for the Conservatives and was first elected in 1964.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Teddy Taylor was one of the great servants of our party in Scotland.

“He built up a huge personal following in his Cathcart seat in the 60s and 70s as the original ‘tenement Tory’.

“Even now, 40 years on, many local people will remember his fierce commitment and dedication to Glasgow.

“Teddy continued that service in Southend for many years where he was held in the same esteem as he was regarded in his home city.

“He was my mum’s MP when she was growing up in the south side of Glasgow. Lots of folk in Glasgow would declare – ‘I’m no voting Tory, but I am voting for Teddy Taylor.’

“He was a true parliamentarian and a great local champion who will be remembered with fondness across the political spectrum.

“We send our deepest condolences to his family and wish them all our support at this time.”

Sturgeon told to scrap named person and start again

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Sturgeon told to scrap named person and start again

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Nicola Sturgeon has been urged to drop her named person scheme and come up with new plans to protect vulnerable children.

It follows a series of legal experts demolishing the SNP's changes to the proposal after the Supreme Court ruled elements of it unlawful last year.

At First Minister's Questions today, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said while the protection of young people should be paramount, the Scottish Government had to come up with plans that were legally robust.

During yesterday's education committee, legal experts said teachers – when they become named persons – would need lawyers “on speed dial”.

Practitioners responsible for delivering the policy would be “damned if they do, damned if they don't” in relation to sharing information about a young person, Ruth added today.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“It's clear that the confidence the First Minister appears to have in this scheme isn't shared by those who'll be responsible for implementing it.

“The named person policy was ruled unlawful by the highest court in the land, and the SNP's remedy to that appears to be deeply flawed.

“The Scottish Government has now been well-warned by experts that these changes will push teachers and health workers into a legal minefield.

“When it comes to the sharing of information, they'll be damned if they do, damned if they don't.

“It's time to start again with a blank sheet of paper.

“We all want to protect vulnerable children, but it has to be done within the law.”

[SNP tax vote abstention 'clearest sign yet' of raid on workers](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- SNP tax vote abstention 'clearest sign yet' of raid on workers

20 Sep 2017



The SNP's decision to wave through Labour plans for a tax hike is the "clearest sign yet" that it plans to hit workers in the pocket.

The nationalists chose not to oppose the Holyrood motion today that would see increases for taxpayers across Scotland, compounding its reputation as the highest-taxed part of the UK.

Only the Scottish Conservatives opposed the Labour proposal, arguing such increases would further punish workers – particularly those on the basic rate who can least afford it.

The change in tack from the SNP directly contradicts previous manifestos where such tax increases were ruled out, and several nationalist MSPs who've criticised the approach on social media in the past.

Following this evening's vote, Labour's motion was passed by 33 votes to 30, with 61 SNP abstentions.

Scottish Conservative shadow finance secretary Murdo Fraser said:

"This is the clearest sign yet that the SNP is heading for a tax raid on the majority of Scotland's workers.

"The nationalists are lurching to the left, and the hardworking people of Scotland will pay the price.

"The Scottish Conservatives are now the only party in Scotland who stand against this tax-grabbing agenda.

"Compounding Scotland's reputation as the highest-taxed part of the UK will be a disaster for businesses and the economy."

[Swinney misses golden opportunity to say how he will get CfE back on track](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Swinney misses golden opportunity to say how he will get CfE back on track

20 Sep 2017



John Swinney has "missed a golden opportunity" to say how he'd sort problems with teacher recruitment and the Curriculum for Excellence in a keynote speech, the Scottish Conservatives have said.

Instead, the education secretary made a point of telling the audience at the Scottish Learning Festival: "I've not made any new policy announcements today, and I'm not going to."

This is despite schools across Scotland being in the grip of a teacher recruitment crisis, with some even asking parents to help out.

And criticism is also mounting over the SNP's Curriculum for Excellence, which experts have said lacks rigour and is in some areas "dumbing down" education.

In addition, after 10 years in charge of education, the SNP has failed to make any progress in closing the attainment gap between pupils from rich and poor backgrounds.

But rather than develop ideas to tackle these issues, Mr Swinney said today: "What I set out last year was the consistent direction of travel we are going to take for the whole of this parliamentary term with no deviation, with no diversion, with no distraction."

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

"This was the perfect opportunity for John Swinney to outline new ideas to get teacher recruitment and the Curriculum for Excellence back on track.

"Instead, he told the audience not only would there be no new policies in this speech, but not to expect any for the next few years either.

"He missed a golden opportunity.

"It's been abundantly clear for some time that the Curriculum for Excellence is not delivering the high standards we need in terms of raising standards across the board and narrowing the attainment gap.

"Today provided a chance to address these concerns. Teachers and parents will be surprised to learn he didn't take it."

[Lawyers demolish SNP attempts to revise named person policy](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Lawyers demolish SNP attempts to revise named person policy



The SNP has been urged to “do the decent thing” and scrap named person plans altogether, after lawyers demolished the policy in Holyrood today.

The Law Society and Faculty of Advocates both gave evidence to the education committee criticising revised plans for the controversial scheme, after the Supreme Court ruled elements of it unlawful last year.

The Law Society’s Kenny Meechan told MSPs those responsible for delivering the policy would need “lawyers on speed dial” to understand the changes to the bill.

And Janys Scott QC, from the Faculty of Advocates, added there was still widespread misunderstanding of what the Scottish Government meant by the word “wellbeing”.

This would create confusion over what the threshold is for intervention by a named person, and what information should be shared and by whom, she said.

It’s the latest setback for the SNP as it attempts to get its state guardian plans not only through parliament, but past judges too.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:

“The lawyers have demolished the Scottish Government’s attempts to respond to the Supreme Court judgement.

“There remains a complete lack of clarity in the new bill and, just as importantly, confusion over what will be in the code of practice.

“Both are a major worry for practitioners who are expected to have all the necessary training and skills to know when to share information and to be able to account for their decisions.

“None of this is clear within the Scottish Government’s revised policy and that has been made clear by practitioners, even some who were originally in favour of the named person policy.

“For families, the policy remains a potential source of intrusion into their family life and that is why the Scottish Government should do the decent thing and scrap the new bill.”

Both Janys Scott QC, from the Faculty of Advocates, and Kenny Meechan, from the Law Society, appeared at today’s education committee in the Scottish Parliament.

To see the Faculty of Advocates’ written submission, visit:

<http://www.advocates.org.uk/media/2498/final-faculty-response-15-aug-2017-named-person.pdf>