

Green Party: Government disability benefit cuts foster prejudice against disabled people



3 February 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley, co-leader: Government policy based on false idea that sick and disabled are guilty until proven innocent**

The Green Party has condemned Government plans [1] to cut disability unemployment benefit in a bid to get more disabled people into work.

Jonathan Bartley, who co-leads the Green Party as a job share so he can care for his disabled son Samuel, said:

“These cuts are illogical, based on a false premise and clearly pernicious. Cutting a benefit designed to support sick and disabled people into employment, is no way to help them into work.

“Those at the receiving end are those that even the Government accepts are sick and disabled. But these cuts will drastically reduce the quality of life for many disabled people and is tantamount to kicking people when they are down.

“Government policy is increasingly based on the false idea that the sick and disabled are guilty until proven innocent, and that if they can be beaten hard enough by a weaponised welfare state they will be forced to find work.

“The Government should instead be focusing on removing the real barriers to finding work. This includes more support, not less, and working with employers to ensure that the world of work is accessible in every way through practices such as flexible working. It should also include tackling the widespread prejudice against disabled people which the Government is itself fostering.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/feb/03/cut-to-disability-benefits-may-make-return-to-work-harder-claim-mps>

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[Green member of House of Lords seeks to 'abolish' herself](#)



3 February 2017

*** Green peer seeks to transform House of Lords from within**

*** Jenny Jones: Lords reform is essential for proper scrutiny of Brexit process**

Jenny Jones, Green member of the House of Lords, will today (February 3) continue her fight to transform the unelected chamber.

Baroness Jones' House of Lords Reform Bill will get its second reading on Friday, with reform of the Lords more important now than ever to enable proper scrutiny of the Brexit process.

Baroness Jones hopes to gather support from within the Lords for her plans to replace the House of Lords with a democratic and effective second chamber. This would use proportional representation to elect a new house, but keep many existing peers as non-voting experts.

Her Bill is the first with this mix of proposals to come from within the Lords.

Jenny Jones said:

"I'm not the only Lord who wants to abolish their right to vote in the second chamber, but I'm aiming to be one of the most energetic peers in making it happen. I'm relatively new to the Lords and I hope my fresh approach will help fast track the various discussions about Lords reform.

"The referendum vote in favour of Brexit makes Lords reform both urgent and inevitable. The government could try to push through all kinds of bad ideas on the back of the Brexit negotiations, the Great Repeal Act and hasty trade deals.

"We need an effective and democratic chamber to help scrutinise the secondary legislation and the international deals.

"The Government may well give itself so-called Henry 8th powers to just unilaterally repeal or amend European laws after the Repeal Act passes, opening the door to a bonfire of environmental and social protections. We need a second chamber that has the legitimacy and popular backing to challenge the use of such anti-democratic powers."

Notes:

1 <https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld/ldordpap.htm>

Jenny's bill is the third on a list to be taken at 10am on Friday 3rd June. Nine peers in addition to Jenny have put their names down to speak so far.

House of Lords Reform Bill [HL] Second Reading [[Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#)]

If the bill is read a second time, [Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb](#) to move that the bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House

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[Green Party slams decision to forge ahead with Heathrow expansion](#)



2 February 2017

The Green Party has called the decision to push ahead with a third runway at Heathrow airport 'entirely misguided and unfair', as the Government publishes plans for the expansion and starts a four month public consultation. [1]

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"The decision to expand Heathrow airport is entirely misguided and unfair. It is clear the Government is prioritising the whims of the super rich instead of taking seriously the need to protect us all against the threat of climate change.

"It is still unclear how the Government can possibly meet the commitments it made in the Paris agreement while forging ahead with its expansion plan. Not only will this turn the lives of local people upside down, but it means the rest of the country will have to do more than they already are, in order to reduce carbon emissions.

"The Government should introduce a frequent flyer levy where those who fly the most pay the most. This would tackle both the demand and growing travel inequality, while providing much needed investment to improve our existing transport infrastructure."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/feb/02/heathrow-third-runway-plans-published-for-public-consultation>

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Caroline Lucas: Vote tonight is a body blow in fight against extreme Brexit



1 February 2017

***Lucas: "Watching so many Labour MPs troop through the yes lobby with the Tories was truly disheartening."**

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has responded to Parliament's vote in favour of triggering Article 50 tonight. In the vote on the second reading of the European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill tonight, 498 MPS voted in favour of triggering Article 50 and 114 MPs voted against. [1]

Lucas said:

"Tonight's vote is a body blow for the fight against the Government's extreme Brexit, and has handed the Tories a massive advantage.

"Watching so many Labour MPs troop through the yes lobby with the Tories was truly disheartening. The Conservatives are set to benefit hugely from rushing through this vote with as little dissent as possible and it's given them far more opportunity to morph a narrow referendum result in favour of leaving the EU into an overwhelming mandate to depart from the world's biggest trading zone, wrecking our social and environmental protections along the way.

"It's now down to MPs to work across party lines to amend this Bill and attempt to avoid the very real dangers of Britain falling off the Brexit cliff edge. As the co-leader of a party that stands for environmental, social and economic justice, I could not support a government offering no assurances to EU nationals living in Britain, threatening the funding of our public services, and planning to end our membership of the single market and customs union. In the coming weeks I'll be standing up to this Government's extreme Brexit plans at every stage – and doing all I can to protect our hard won environment and social protections."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/blog/live/2017/feb/01/article-50-debate-vote-bill-pmps-theresa-may-jeremy-corbyn-ivan-rogers-to-give-evidence-to-mps-about-why-he-quit-as-uks-ambassador-to-eu-politics-live>

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Green Party to stand in Stoke by-election



1 February 2017

North Staffordshire Green Party has announced local activist Adam Colclough as its candidate for the Stoke by-election.

Colclough is from Stoke and understands the problems it faces. He wants to end austerity and tackle insecure employment, low pay and inadequate housing. His priorities are the NHS, social care and education.

Colclough works in logistics operations but also has roles in a mental health forum, NHS patients' forum and young offenders' rehabilitation organisations. He is studying part time for a sociology degree at Staffordshire University.

Colclough said:

"I'm absolutely committed to fighting for a better future for my city and its people. Politicians need to be honest about the real causes of the problems that blight Stoke on Trent and offer credible solutions that will work. Simply staying silent about austerity instead of offering realistic,

alternative economic and industrial policies is not good enough.

“The people of Stoke have been taken for granted for far too long and the Green Party will be honest in addressing these issues to create a fair and sustainable future. Many people in Stoke are disconnected from the three mainstream parties and seeking an alternative. We want to offer them one based on inclusion and hope, not division and prejudice.”

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Adam has lived in Stoke his whole life which means he truly understands the strengths and challenges of the local area. He would do whatever it takes to work with others of like mind to meet the needs of the local community, and defeat the forces that seek to separate us. I’m proud that Adam is offering a brighter, fairer future.”

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