

# Fixed-term Parliaments Bill

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**B I L L**

TO

Provide for fixed-term Parliaments.

**B**E IT ENACTED by the Queen’s most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

**1 Dissolution of Parliament after four years**

- (1) Excepting only where a dissolution has taken place under sections 2 or 3 below, a Parliament shall stand dissolved on the date twenty-eight days before the fourth anniversary of the date of the general election at which the members of the House of Commons in that Parliament were elected. 5
- (2) The Septennial Act 1715 (c. 38) is hereby repealed.

**2 Dissolution of Parliament following no confidence resolution**

- (1) Whenever the House of Commons has by resolution expressed no confidence in Her Majesty’s Government, Parliament shall stand dissolved on the seventh day following the date of the resolution. 10
- (2) Whenever the House of Commons has by resolution expressed no confidence in the Prime Minister, and has not, within twenty-eight days of that date, expressed confidence in the same or another Prime Minister, Parliament shall stand dissolved.

**3 Dissolution of a Parliament summoned following a dissolution under section 2** 15

- (1) Where a Parliament has been dissolved under section 2, then—
  - (a) if the date of that dissolution was more than six months from the date on which that Parliament would anyway have stood dissolved (the “section 1 date”), the new Parliament summoned following that dissolution shall itself stand dissolved on the section 1 date, and 20
  - (b) if the date of that dissolution was within six months of the section 1 date, the new Parliament summoned following that dissolution shall stand dissolved on the fourth anniversary of the section 1 date.

- (2) Subsection (1) does not apply where the new Parliament is itself dissolved earlier under section 2.

#### 4 Summoning of a new Parliament

- (1) Her Majesty shall, on the day following the dissolution of a Parliament under sections 1, 2 or 3 above, issue a proclamation for the summoning of a new Parliament; and the Meeting of Parliament Act 1694 (c. 2) is hereby repealed. 5

- (2) The dates on which—  
 (a) writs shall be issued,  
 (b) polling shall take place, and  
 (c) the new Parliament shall meet 10  
 shall be fixed by decision of the Electoral Commission so as to be consistent with the provisions as to the timetable governing general elections in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 of the Representation of the People Act 1983 (c. 2) and with subsections (3) and (4) below.

- (3) In the case of a dissolution under sections 1 or 3— 15  
 (a) the date for polling shall be no earlier than three and no later than five weeks after the date of the dissolution, and  
 (b) the date on which the new Parliament shall meet shall be no earlier than one and no later than two weeks after polling has taken place;  
 and the decision of the Electoral Commission shall be made no later than eight 20  
 weeks before the date of the dissolution and shall be laid before Parliament.

- (4) In the case of a dissolution under section 2—  
 (a) the date for polling shall be no earlier than four weeks and no later than six weeks after the date of the dissolution, and  
 (b) the date on which the new Parliament shall meet shall be no earlier than 25  
 one and no later than two weeks after polling has taken place;  
 and the decision of the Electoral Commission shall be made no later than one week after the date of the dissolution and shall be published in the London, Edinburgh and Belfast Gazettes.

#### 5 Interpretation 30

- (1) For the purposes of section 2, the House of Commons shall be held to have “expressed no confidence” in Her Majesty’s Government or in the Prime Minister if it has—  
 (a) agreed to a motion that it has no confidence in Her Majesty’s Government or, as the case may be, the Prime Minister, or 35  
 (b) disagreed to a motion that it has confidence in Her Majesty’s Government or, as the case may be, the Prime Minister.
- (2) For the purposes of section 2(2), the House of Commons shall be held to have “expressed confidence” in the Prime Minister if it has—  
 (a) agreed to a motion that it has confidence in the Prime Minister, or 40  
 (b) disagreed to a motion that it has no confidence in the Prime Minister.

#### 6 Commencement, short title and extent

- (1) This Act comes into force on the date of the first general election after it has received Royal Assent.

- (2) This Act may be cited as the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2002.
- (3) This Act extends to the whole of the United Kingdom.





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## B I L L

To provide for fixed-term Parliaments.

*Ordered to be brought in by Tony Wright,  
Mr Graham Allen, Kevin Brennan,  
Annette Brooke, Sir Patrick Cormack,  
Mr Frank Field, Mr Mark Fisher, Helen Jackson,  
Mr Mark Oaten, Mr Paul Tyler and Brian White.*

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*Ordered, by The House of Commons,  
to be Printed, 7th May 2002.*

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