



LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

26 Whitehall
LONDON SW1A 2WH
Tel: 020 7276 1005 Fax: 020 7276 1006

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Lay Membership of a Committee on Standards

Thank you very much for your letter of 29 February 2012 on lay membership of a Committee on Standards.

I very much welcome the fact that the Procedure Committee broadly accepts the approach which we propose to take. I am also grateful to your Committee for publishing the Government response so promptly.

The Government have carefully considered each of the points you make. On the length of debate on a motion for appointment, I do not accept that the comparisons you make are the right ones, insofar as the post of Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards is a single post of greater importance and the length of debate on lay members of the Speaker's Committee on IPSA is determined by the fact that they are proceedings pursuant to an Act of Parliament. However, having reconsidered the matter in the light of your concerns, which were echoed by Kevin Barron in a letter of 1 March, we have concluded that the most appropriate comparators are the debates under Standing Order No. 15(1)(c) on contested nominations to select committees, which can normally take up to an hour. Accordingly, we propose to amend the motion to provide for debates of up to one hour.

On your second point, I should say first of all that such circumstances are most unlikely to arise. However, in such unlikely circumstances, I believe that the House of Commons Commission would be able to consider the matter and take steps to ensure that the Committee could continue functioning effectively.

On this basis, I very much hope that you will be willing to add your name to the Motion.

Rt Hon Sir George Young Bt MP

Rt Hon Greg Knight MP,
Chair of the Procedure Committee

*email: leader@commonsleader.x.gsi.gov.uk
www.commonslider.gov.uk*