



CRISPIN BLUNT MP
Member of Parliament for Reigate

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Mr Edward Goodman
23 Budgen Drive
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Surrey RH1 2QB

Our Reference: CB/TB

3 December 2012

Dear Mr Goodman,

Thank you for your letter 23 November 2012 about the issue of voting rights for prisoners.

On balance, I agree with your analysis about the lack of a convincing rationale behind denying prisoners the right to vote. Throughout my time as Prisons Minister, I met countless offenders who felt they had no stake in, or duty towards, their community and so felt less compunction about doing wrong against it. I believe enfranchising prisoners might very well have positive benefits with the regard to re-engaging offenders with society.

Secondly, I do not believe it should be a cause for celebration amongst the public, or politicians, for the United Kingdom to breach a ruling by the European Court of Human Rights, or dismiss its punitive response as a mere constitutional slap on the wrist. A superficial examination of the sorts of countries which consistently do the same does not, by my reckoning, put us in good company.

However, the democratic side of me is pleased that Parliament will have the chance to properly debate this issue, and I hope the standard of that debate suitably reflects the importance and complexity of the subject matter.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely
Crispin Blunt

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