



The Constitution Unit

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PRESS NOTICE

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Poll shows surprise result on public priorities for Lords reform Poll of peers confirms growing confidence of the House of Lords

A private seminar in the House of Lords will today hear surprise findings from a public survey commissioned by the Constitution Unit at University College London about attitudes to the House of Lords. The seminar, chaired by the Lord Speaker Baroness Hayman, will also hear results from a survey of peers demonstrating that the chamber is growing in confidence and strength.

The public survey, carried out by Ipsos MORI in late October, asked which factors the public think are important to the legitimacy of the House of Lords. It found:

- More of the public consider it important that the House of Lords act in accordance with public opinion, that it consider legislation carefully and in detail, and that the appointments process for peers is trustworthy, than think it important for the chamber to include elected members.
- Forced to choose one or two factors that are most important to the legitimacy of the Lords, inclusion of elected members consistently scores fifth out of seven amongst the public, below these three factors and also below inclusion of independent members.
- Among respondents considering themselves knowledgeable about the Westminster Parliament the most important factor is the chamber considering legislation carefully, followed by trust in the appointments process. Inclusion of elected members ranks six out of seven.
- Asked whether both chambers of parliament are carrying out their policy role well, more of the public agree this is the case about the Lords than about the Commons. Amongst those knowledgeable about Parliament, this difference is more marked.

Commenting on the results, **Meg Russell, Senior Research Fellow at the Constitution Unit said:** "Previous polls have shown that a majority of the public support inclusion of elected members in the House of Lords, but that a majority also support other factors such as inclusion of independent members and a culture of careful legislative work. What our survey shows for the first time is that, faced with a choice, the public prioritises other factors above the inclusion of elected members. In particular the public appear to favour the cleaning up of the appointments process rather than inclusion of elected members, following the 'cash for honours' controversy."

Notes for Editors

- A summary of the results from both the public survey and the survey of peers is available on the Constitution Unit website, <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/files/research/parliament/lords/survey-results2007.pdf>
- The Constitution Unit is an independent and non-partisan research Centre based at University College London. This research was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.
- Meg Russell is available for comment on 0207 679 4998. The Constitution Unit's Press Officer, Brian Walker, is available on 07802 176347 and the Unit's Administrator Victoria Spence can be contacted for general queries on 0207 679 4977 (v.spence@ucl.ac.uk).