

Legislation at Westminster

Parliamentary Actors and Influence in the Making of British Law

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Parliamentary Actors and Influence
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MEG RUSSELL AND DANIEL GOVER



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The Westminster parliament is a highly visible political institution, and one of its core functions is approving new laws. Yet Britain's legislative process is often seen as executive-dominated, and parliament as relatively weak. As this book shows, such impressions can be misleading.

Drawing on the largest study of its kind for more than forty years, Meg Russell and Daniel Gover cast new light on the political dynamics that shape the legislative process. They provide a fascinating account of the passage of twelve government bills—collectively attracting more than 4000 proposed amendments—through both the House of Commons and House of Lords.

These include highly contested changes such as Labour's identity cards scheme and the coalition's welfare reforms, alongside other relatively uncontroversial measures. As well as studying the parliamentary record and amendments, the authors draw from more than 100 interviews with legislative insiders.

"If you want to know the true story of how parliament legislates, read this book carefully. If you think you already know, then read it even more carefully—as this is about real bills and the politics behind and within each of them, and it may well contain things that surprise you. If instead you're interested in politics but not in legislation at Westminster, then you're missing something: there is more going on than meets the eye!"

- David Natzler, Clerk of the House of Commons

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