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11 May 2017

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Former Better Together leaders Alistair Darling and Blair McDougall have joined forces to urge Scots to reject another divisive independence referendum by voting for Labour.

Former Better Together chairman Mr Darling has written to tens of thousands of voters in East Renfrewshire on behalf of Labour General Election candidate Blair McDougall, who was Better Together's campaign director.

In his letter, Mr Darling – the former Chancellor – endorses Blair McDougall as the best candidate to take on the SNP in East Renfrewshire and urges voters not to risk letting the Nationalists back in.

Scottish Labour candidate for East Renfrewshire Blair McDougall said:

"I am delighted with Alistair Darling's endorsement. He and I brought together voters from across the political spectrum to stop the SNP in 2014 and I can do it again in East Renfrewshire.

"East Renfrewshire is home for me. I was raised here and I'm raising my family here. I want to be a campaigning local MP focused on making our home better rather than on dividing us from our neighbours.

"I won't go to Westminster to back a hard Brexit or to cheer lead for independence. If voters want to send Nicola Sturgeon a message to drop her plans for a divisive second independence referendum, they must vote Labour on June 8.

"A vote for any other party simply risks letting the SNP back in, and increases the risk of another unwanted referendum.

"Voting Tory won't send a message to Nicola Sturgeon, it will only send Theresa May back to Downing Street to deliver a hard Brexit that gives the Nationalists the excuse they are looking for to call another divisive referendum."

The text of Alistair Darling's letter is as follows:

Blair McDougall ran the winning campaign against independence. On June 8th he's standing to be your next MP.

I retired from frontline politics after the independence referendum but I'm sending you this letter because your vote at the General Election on June 8th can send a strong message to Nicola Sturgeon that our No vote should be

respected.

Blair McDougall and I brought together Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats to form the Better Together campaign. Blair led the fight against the SNP and we won. Now we need your help to bring together the votes of the majority again.

In East Renfrewshire the No vote was one of the highest in the country, but despite that result today you are represented by the SNP who want to force another divisive referendum.

Why? Because at the last General Election the votes of the No-voting majority were split, letting the SNP win in East Renfrewshire. Too many people who voted No in the independence referendum voted for the Conservatives, who finished in a distant third place, and Labour was narrowly defeated.

Please don't risk that this time. Use your vote to elect an MP who will oppose Nicola Sturgeon's plan for another divisive referendum and will tell her to focus on the day job of fixing our schools and hospitals.

A vote for the Conservatives won't stop another divisive referendum. It will simply let the SNP win again.

Regardless of what is happening across the country, and regardless of what the opinion polls say, we know what the real result was here last time.

Please don't risk it. Use your vote for Labour this time, to say No to independence and to elect Blair McDougall as your next Member of Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Alistair Darling