

Green parliamentarians call on Labour to “stand up against this government” over right to protest



Green Party

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Green Party parliamentarians, elected representatives and members gathered outside Parliament today [Wednesday] to protest the draconian measures in the Policing Bill and urge Labour to join them in standing up against the government.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill has reached the House of Lords this week, where crucial votes will be held to defend the right to effective protest, culminating in a decisive vote on Monday [17 January].

The Green Party has called on Labour and independent members of the House of Lords to stand up for the right to take part in peaceful protest, which they say will be removed by the Bill.

Dozens of Green Party members and representatives attended the Covid-safe protest outside Parliament today to hear speeches from parliamentarians Caroline Lucas, Jenny Jones and Natalie Bennett and London Assembly member Zack Polanski.

Baroness Jenny Jones said:

“It’s not easy to change legislation, but here we really can make a difference. The problem we have is that Labour is not onside, it is dithering.

“So what we are trying to do is get national Labour, Yvette Cooper and Kier Starmer, to understand that these measures suppress genuine dissent with the government. It’s a Belarus-style move by our horrible government.

“We can stop it if Labour is onside.”

Baroness Natalie Bennett said:

“If we don’t have protest, we will have even worse government and council policies than we have now.

“Jenny has set out how we have a real opportunity in the House of Lords. It’s all down to the Labour peers, that they stand up against the government, stand up for rights that so many Labour people over more than a century have actually used and have been essential to get rights for working people.

“We have a message to Labour, you have to stand up against this government, you can stop these dreadful amendments now, you’ve got to do it.”

Caroline Lucas MP said:

“Priti Patel has said that she intends to use the Bill to criminalise people taking part in climate-related protests. But the sweeping powers of this Bill could be used against anyone who falls foul of what the home secretary decides is acceptable.

“The threat to democracy goes way beyond party politics, and we are calling on MPs of all parties and members of the House of Lords to stand up for human rights and reject this extremely dangerous and anti-democratic Bill. Whatever the home secretary believes, protest is a fundamental right in our democracy, not a crime. It must be protected.”

Zack Polanski AM said:

“These are not acts of a government that think they’re in charge. This is an act of a government who think they’re cornered, that the power of the people is coming and they know that we have the ethical and moral responsibility and duty on our side.

“And we are challenging them and it’s working because they are hearing. We need to keep this up, Labour need to join us, hear the call loud, hear it clear, because we’re here and we’re not going away.”

Notes

1

Photos and footage of the event are available from the Green Party press office: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

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