

## How do I represent my constituents on the issue of our exit from the EU?

A whole series of emails are arriving in my email box and doubtless in the email boxes of other MPs drafted to ask How will I represent the constituent, given their view. There are different versions, with some of the drafts used by people who want to leave, some who wish to remain, and some who want a second referendum. Some are individually worded by constituents. There are several different views, but an MP of course only has one vote.

There is, however, common ground in the vast majority of the emails I receive. Whether coming from Remain or Leave supporters, the big majority dislike the Withdrawal Agreement. Both sides see this as an attempted compromise which suits few. Both see the Agreement turns us into a rule taker and bill payer. It removes our bargaining levers by legally binding us to give the EU what it wants before we have secured what we might like. Most people see this rightly as a very bad deal, with no agreement on what we might get out of an eventual Future Partnership Agreement. Some Remain voters think it would better to stay in the EU to have vote and voice as well as taking their rules and paying the bills. Leave voters say the Withdrawal Agreement is not leaving, as we stay in the single market and customs union and carry on paying large sums to buy more time for talks.

This makes my task that much easier. My judgement has been throughout that this Agreement has to be voted down. In the light of the extensive correspondence I have received I do not have to worry about whether I am speaking for my constituents in so doing, as a majority tell me they too want it voted down. The question of what we should then do produces a variety of answers amongst constituents. I will return to these issues over the period of the vote and the sequel to the vote. I feel I need to honour my promises to electors in the 2017 General Election when I said I would support carrying out the will of the nation in the referendum.

The resignation of yet another Minister, the eleventh to go on this matter so far, is a reminder of how Mrs May cannot win this vote unless Labour change their minds. Ministers give up interesting jobs reluctantly, in order to vote against the government. That is eleven more votes against the Agreement so far. It is difficult to see how the Prime Minister could carry on if she goes down to defeat on this central policy she has designed.

The sooner we tell the EU we cannot sign the Withdrawal Agreement the better. The sooner we table a proper Free Trade Agreement and see if they want one the better.