

Why we voted against the Tories' crime authorisation Bill

Today, Home Affairs Spokesperson **Alistair Carmichael** led **cross-party opposition to the Government's Covert Human Intelligence Sources (Criminal Conduct) Bill**, calling a vote against the legislation in the House of Commons.

[Writing in the Independent](#) ahead of the debate, Alistair set out our concerns:

"The Bill gives vast powers not only to the security agencies but also to a questionable collection of public bodies. There are no real limits, weak safeguards and inadequate oversight.

"The Bill has no limits on the types of crime that could be authorised. Murder, torture – it is all on the table as written. Nor is there any independent approval of a decision to authorise a crime – or even a requirement for police or prosecutors to be informed about it at all...

It is essential that there is a clear legal basis for the actions of government agents. It has been lacking for far too long.

The Tories are using their majority to ram through things that no responsible Government should do

This Bill, however, is not fit for purpose. Parliament must stand up to this disturbing government overreach, and anyone who cares about the rule of law must oppose this Bill as it stands."

The Liberal Democrats voted against Third Reading, but most Conservative MPs backed it and Labour abstained, so the Bill passed by 313 votes to 98.

Following the vote, Alistair said:

"This is a dangerous Bill from a Conservative Government that is careless with our rights and freedoms.

"We all understand the need for MI5 and the police to authorise undercover agents to do things that would, in normal circumstances, be illegal. If the Government had restricted itself to that, it would have resounding cross-party support.

"Instead, the Tories are using their majority to ram through things that no responsible Government should do. **They are trying to award far too broad powers to far too many parts of government, with virtually no safeguards.**

“That’s why the Liberal Democrats worked cross-party to try and fix this law. With the Government blocking our amendments, we had no choice but to vote against the Bill.”

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[Liberal Democrats secure free school meals in Wales until Easter 2021](#)

I am pleased to announce today that in Wales we have secured free school meal provision for all school holidays until at least Easter 2021.

The coronavirus pandemic has presented countless challenges this year, but **with the Welsh Government now guaranteeing £11 million for these provisions, we can help support those who look to school for more than just education.**

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[5 steps to get a grip on the coronavirus crisis](#)

People across the country have endured terrible hardships over the past six months. They’ve lost loved ones, lost livelihoods and been cut off from friends and family.

We have made huge sacrifices and played by the Government’s rules – we deserve to have confidence that these rules will work.

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[Ed Davey's response to the London Lockdown](#)

The Government have completely lost control of coronavirus across vast swathes of the country, and the situation in London is looking very difficult.

In the north of England, and now in London, the sacrifices of millions of people have been squandered by this Government.

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[We must end hair discrimination](#)

On behalf of the Liberal Democrats, I have written to Equalities Minister Liz Truss calling on her to stop all forms of hair discrimination.

We must combat racism wherever we find it in our society, and this all-too-prevalent form of prejudice must end.

Read my letter in full...

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