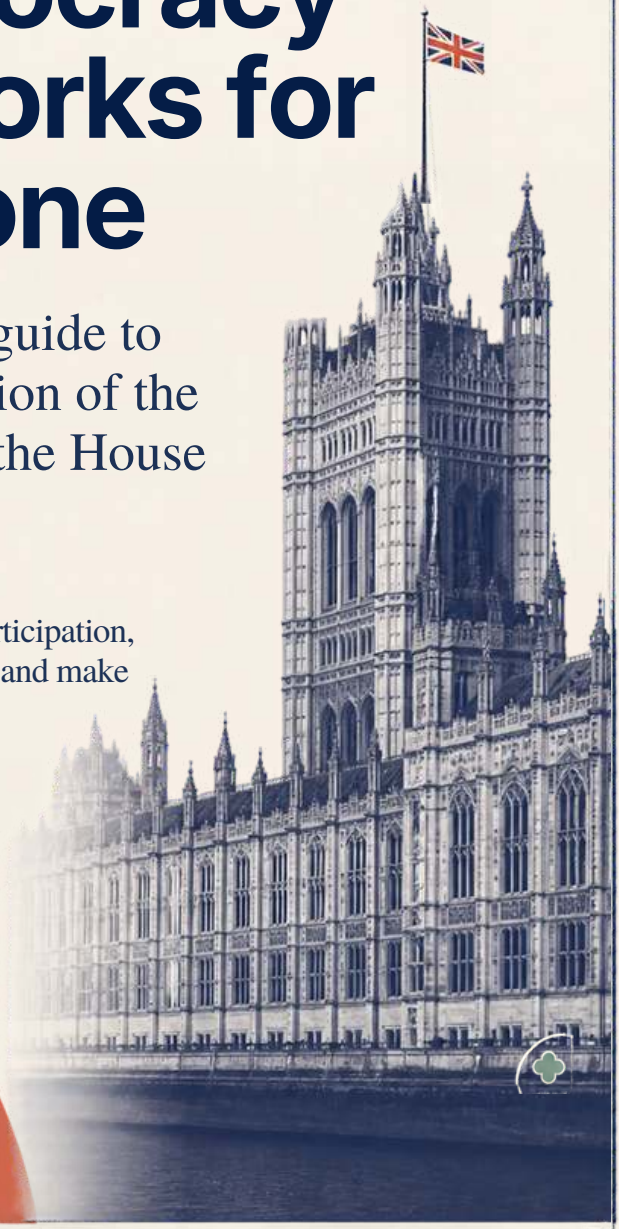
A democracy that works for everyone

A civil society guide to the Representation of the People Bill for the House of Lords

Our message: Widen participation, protect electoral integrity and make every reform workable in practice.



FAIR VOTE
fairvote.uk

For more information, please contact Kyle Taylor at kyle@fairvote.uk

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A Message from Fair Vote UK



Kyle Taylor

Executive Director, Fair Vote UK

Dear Member of the House of Lords,

The Representation of the People Bill is the most significant renewal of our democracy in a generation. It extends the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds, the biggest change to the franchise since the voting age was lowered to 18 in 1969. It begins the move to automatic voter registration and strengthens the rules on money in politics. The decisions you take at Committee Stage will shape who takes part in our elections, and how fairly they are run, for decades to come.

Fair Vote UK has put this guide together in partnership with 17 other organisations. Between us we cover youth participation, voter registration, transparency, corruption and money in politics, digital campaigning and the safety of people in public life. Few bills have brought this much of civil society together. Each organisation speaks for its own area of expertise, and all of us share a commitment to elections that are fair and trusted.

We hope this guide is useful as you scrutinise the Bill. **The organisations named in it are ready to provide evidence, briefings and support.** We would be delighted to see you at our drop-in on 10 November (details listed throughout the document).

With thanks,

Kyle Taylor
Founder and Executive Director, Fair Vote UK
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This briefing has been supported by the following organisations



FAIR VOTE
fairvote.uk

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL
the global coalition against corruption

spotlight on corruption

RADIX BIG TENT

Open Britain

UNLOCK DEMOCRACY

Electoral Reform Society

MAKE VOTES MATTER

99%

Electoral Integrity Project

Clean Up Westminster

50:50 PARLIAMENT

SOUK
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appg Political and Media Literacy

RUSI

MY LIFE MY SAY

MIGRANT DEMOCRACY PROJECT

ELECTHER

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THE ISSUES RELEVANT TO THEIR WORK; INCLUSION OF A LOGO DOES NOT IMPLY ENDORSEMENT OF EVERY PROPOSAL.

How to use this guide

References are to HL Bill 47 as brought from the Commons. Key amedments appear at the back of this guide.

Contacts for further information or to request a briefing on a specific issue are located throughout the guide.

THE THREE MARKERS

1. **DEFEND**
Identifies provisions in the Bill that must be retained.

2. **GO FURTHER**
Identifies changes via amendment we encourage Peers to pursue and support.

3. **NOT YET IN THE BILL**
Marks sections that set out new proposals requiring inclusion in the bill via amendment.

Representation of the People Bill drop-in

Tuesday 10th November 2026

4.00pm – 6.00pm

House of Lords, Committee Room 3

Meet organisations working on votes at 16, voter registration, political finance, digital campaigning and protection for people in public life.

Discuss the Bill's provisions, explore improvements and request further evidence or a tailored briefing during Committee Stage.

Register for the final details

Scan the QR code and enter your details to receive the room and final event information nearer the date.

Alternatively, email Shima Langan at shima@ukanticorruptioncoalition.org.

Registration URL: **fairvote.uk/rsvp**

For more information or a briefing please contact: Kyle Taylor at kyle@fairvote.uk

The Bill at a glance

This booklet refers to HL Bill 47, as brought from the Commons — not an Act in force.

WHERE THE BILL IS NOW

Completed its Commons stages and received its Lords second reading on 14 September 2026.

Lords committee stage is scheduled from 2 November 2026 into December.

WHAT THE BILL WOULD CHANGE

- Voting rights for 16- and 17-year-olds at UK elections.
- New approaches to electoral registration.
- Changes to election administration and the voter ID accepted.
- Stronger political-finance rules, with more needed.
- Strengthening Electoral Commission powers.
- Enhanced protection against election-related intimidation.

Our proposed approach:

Defend the Bill's core aims, go further in key areas to further safeguard our democracy and ensure timely delivery.

PART 1

Votes at 16



Give young people a say and the support to use it

DEFEND the extension of voting rights to 16- and 17-year-olds in clause 1. Protect the accompanying provision for early registration, assistance and awareness, and safeguards for younger people's voter information.

GO FURTHER

- Require the government to report within twelve months on support for the new 16- and 17-year-old franchise, including civic education and registration for 14- to 25-year-olds.
- Allow schools and colleges to share data with registration officers so young people are registered as they become eligible.
- Keep the registration deadline at 11.59 p.m. until Automated Voter Registration is fully in place.
- Fund impartial political and media literacy education, teacher training and a catch-up programme reaching young people outside mainstream education.

Deliver the franchise in time for the next general election, with early information campaigns and support for local delivery.

For more information contact:
Catrin Trudgill, My Life My Say, catrin@mlms.org.uk
Dr Jessica Garland, ERS, Jessica.Garland@electoral-reform.org.uk

PART 2

Registration of voters



Turn automated registration into a practical entitlement

The Electoral Commission estimated that up to 8 million people across the UK were missing or incorrectly registered. In Great Britain, registration completeness was 65% among private renters, compared with 95% among outright homeowners.

DEFEND

Defend clauses 17 to 19 and Schedule 2, enabling registration and updates without an application. Protect safeguards for anonymous registration and support the move to an opt-in edited register in clause 38.

GO FURTHER

1. Create a duty to implement Automated Voter Registration, not merely a power to pursue it.
2. Publish a plan for implementation and set a clear timetable.
3. Use appropriate data sources, including National Insurance and education provider systems, with strong privacy, eligibility and redress safeguards.
4. Publish aggregate ward-level registration and application statistics so gaps can be identified and acted on.

A right to vote has little value if an eligible person is missing from the register.

For more information or a briefing, contact:
Tom Brake, Unlock Democracy, tom.brake@unlockdemocracy.org.uk

PART 3

Conduct of elections



Voter ID: reduce the barriers created by voter ID

DEFEND clause 48's expansion of accepted identification in Great Britain. It would allow qualifying, unexpired physical payment and cash withdrawal cards bearing the required name details, and make provision for digital forms of accepted documents. The card route is particularly important because it does not require a photograph.

GO FURTHER

Require consistent monitoring and publication of the effects of voter ID, including voters turned away and those who do not return.

Guarantee accessible, free, non-digital routes to Voter Authority Certificates.

Provide clear public information well before polling day, including which cards qualify and the requirement that they remain in date.

Eligible voters should be able to cast their ballot without avoidable obstacles.

For more information or a briefing, contact:
Dr Jessica Garland, ERS, jessica.garland@electoral-reform.org.uk
Tom Brake, Unlock Democracy, tom.brake@unlockdemocracy.org.uk

PART 4

Campaigns and political expenditure



Unlimited donations: prevent undue influence through large political donations

The Bill tightens several routes by which money enters politics. However, a restriction on overseas contributors may be circumvented and does not address the influence of large donations from other currently permissible donors.

GO FURTHER

1. **Introduce a meaningful annual cap on political donations, with a clear limit, workable transition arrangements and effective enforcement. The cap should be universal and address indirect giving and connected entities.**

2. **Consider donation caps and campaign spending limits together, with proportional rules that enable parties and campaigners to continue effective democratic activity.**

For more information or a briefing, contact:
Izzie Blackburn Transparency International UK
izzie.blackburn@transparency.org.uk

PART 4

The source of political money

Defend stronger checks and close loopholes around them



Voters should be able to find out where political money comes from.

DEFEND

Defend the Bill's cryptoasset restrictions, cap on overseas contributors, donor risk assessments, stronger company and LLP rules, and additional controls on unincorporated associations.

GO FURTHER

- Tie the profits test to UK-generated, post-tax profits and prevent circumvention through group structures or transfers.
- Strengthen know-your-donor checks with clear guidance, verifiable information and sufficient regulatory capacity.
- Improve transparency about money channelled through unincorporated associations and prevent multiple smaller contributions concealing a larger source.
- Scrutinise commencement, transitional arrangements and coverage so cryptoasset restrictions do not leave alternative routes for opaque funding.

For more information or a briefing, contact:
Tim Picton, Spotlight on Corruption, tim.picton@spotlightcorruption.org
Rose Zussman, Transparency International, rose.zussman@transparency.org.uk

PART 4

Closing the gaps in political finance



Know where the money comes from, and make the rules bite

The Bill strengthens checks on political money, but the checks only work if loopholes are closed and the penalties deter. A fine that a well-funded campaign can treat as a cost of doing business protects no one.

GO FURTHER: Follow the money

1. **Implement the Rycroft Review's recommendations by extending the new know-your-donor checks to mirror the UK's anti-money-laundering regime, including risk factors such as the donor's location and source of funds.**
2. **Make the new donor declaration requirements under section 54A of PPERA 2000 robust, and close the remaining loopholes before they commence.**
3. **Restrict donations from public contractors and pre-approved suppliers, to prevent conflicts between party funding and public procurement.**

GO FURTHER: Enforcement

1. **Raise maximum civil penalties to £500,000 per offence or 4% of campaign spending, whichever is higher.**
2. **Raise maximum sentences for the most serious political finance offences, and establish a properly resourced specialist police unit to investigate them.**
3. **Strengthen the Electoral Commission's powers to simplify spending return rules and to obtain information from candidates.**

For more information or a briefing, contact:

Tim Picton, Spotlight on Corruption, tim.picton@spotlightcorruption.org
Tom Brake, Unlock Democracy, tom.brake@unlockdemocracy.org.uk

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Registration URL: **fairvote.uk/rsvp**

For more information or a briefing please contact: Kyle Taylor at kyle@fairvote.uk

PART 4

Digital campaign transparency



Let voters see who is trying to influence them

DEFEND

Defend clause 72's extension of imprint requirements for qualifying unpaid electronic material promoted by organisations outside the existing specified categories. Implementation needs clear guidance so affected organisations understand when the rules apply.

GO FURTHER

- Establish a comprehensive, searchable public repository of paid digital political advertising, including the advert, payer, ultimate controller, spending, targeting and reach.
- Require clear disclosure of materially AI-generated or manipulated campaign content, including deceptive use of a person's image or voice.
- Extend safeguards against foreign-funded political advertising beyond the regulated election period.

For more info contact: Phoebe Arnold, Full Fact, phoebe@fullfact.org

PART 4

Digital campaigning and electoral information



NOT YET IN THE BILL

Make the rules effective when harm happens

GO FURTHER

- Clarify how electoral offences apply to digital communications and deepfakes, including digitally manipulated false statements of fact about a candidate's personal character or conduct.
- Create a code for political advertising, overseen by an independent body, with timely adjudication, effective remedies and protection for legitimate political opinion.
- Establish a public protocol for serious election information incidents, with clear thresholds, independent assessment and communication.

These proposals should be accompanied by sustained political and media literacy support, including for newly enfranchised voters.

For more information or a briefing, please contact:
Phoebe Arnold, Full Fact, phoebe@fullfact.org

PART 5

Enforcement and the Electoral Commission

Protect independence and make enforcement credible



DEFEND

Defend clause 78, which removes the strategy and policy statement provisions and strengthens Electoral Commission independence. Retain the extension of enforcement functions & information-sharing provisions in clause 79, subject to appropriate protections for sensitive information.

GO FURTHER

- Strengthen the independence of the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission against a single-party majority.
- Enable the Electoral Commission to require information before launching a formal investigation, including from online platforms.
- Ensure civil penalties provide a meaningful deterrent and clarify the level, scope and timely implementation of sanctions.
- Tackle the criminal enforcement gap for political finance offences with effective investigation powers and proportionate treatment of administrative errors.

For more information or a briefing, please contact:
Tim Picton, Spotlight on Corruption tim.picton@spotlightcorruption.org
Tom Brake, Unlock Democracy tom.brake@unlockdemocracy.org.uk

PART 6

Hostility towards candidates



Disqualification orders and sentencing: protect people taking part in democracy

DEFEND

Defend the Bill's measures on hostility, sentencing and disqualification, including protection for electoral officers and their staff.

GO FURTHER

Make candidate address privacy the default and account for abuse directed at candidates' relatives and staff.

Support carefully drafted reforms addressing domestic abuse offences and relevant disqualification orders, with clear thresholds and due process.

Publish accessible, consistent candidate safety guidance with clear reporting and support routes.

Support protections for candidates' relatives and staff, and an Ofcom code of practice on electoral harm in election periods.

For more info, contact: Annabel Mullin, Elect Her, annabel@elect-her.org.uk

NOT YET IN THE BILL

Participation and representation



Make voting and standing for election accessible

- Support practical reforms for overseas voting so ballots can arrive, be returned and be counted before the deadline, while preserving ballot secrecy and reliable administration.
- Re-establish an Access to Elected Office Fund in England so disability-related campaign costs do not determine who can stand.
- Bring section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 into force and publish anonymised candidate diversity information.

Extend voting rights to residents

- Extend local voting rights in England and Northern Ireland to residents with lawful immigration status, and parliamentary voting rights to residents with settled status or Indefinite Leave to Remain.

GO FURTHER

A true democracy should mean all legal residents have the right to vote.

For more information or a briefing please contact:
Dr Jessica Garland, Electoral Reform Society, jessica.garland@electoral-reform.org.uk
Lara Parizotto, Migrant Democracy Project, lara@migrantdemos.org.uk

Specific amendments we encourage you to support

Note: We have included amendments that were tabled when this booklet went to print. Please contact us if you would like further up-to-date amendment lists as committee stage progresses, particularly with regard to political finance, donation caps and spending limits.

Votes at 16

- **Lord Wallace of Saltaire** and **Lord Rennard** (after clause 16): report within 12 months on support for the new franchise, including civic education and registering 14- to 25-year-olds.
- **Lord Rennard,** with **Lord Wallace of Saltaire** and **Baroness Royal of Blaisdon** (clause 17): let schools and colleges share data with registration officers.
- **Lord Rennard:** keep the registration deadline at 11.59 p.m.

Registration of voters

- **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** publish a plan to implement registration without an application.
- **Baroness Lister of Burtersett:** a duty to implement automated voter registration by 31 October 2028, using HMPO and National Insurance data as a minimum.
- **Lord Rennard:** DWP to supply National Insurance number details to registration officers.
- **Lord Rennard:** DWP to supply details of young people issued National Insurance numbers before their 16th birthday.
- **Lord Rennard:** higher and further education providers in England to share data with registration officers.
- **Lord Pack** (after clause 19): publish ward-level registration and application statistics.
- **Lord Pack** (clause 50): set out further election-related information that regulations can require.

Specific amendments we encourage you to support

Participation and representation

Baroness Lister of Burtersett (after clause 16): local voting rights in England and Northern Ireland for residents with lawful immigration status; parliamentary voting rights for those with settled status or Indefinite Leave to Remain.

Baroness Leaman, with Baroness Thornhill, Lord Blunkett and Baroness Grey-Thompson (after clause 84): an Access to Elected Office Fund for England.

Baroness Leaman, with Baroness Lister of Burtersett and Baroness Thornhill (after clause 84): commence section 106 of the Equality Act 2010 within three months.

Baroness Lister of Burtersett, with Baroness Thornhill (after clause 79): the Electoral Commission to collect and publish section 106 data after each election.

Lord Pack, with Baroness Pinnock and Lord Jackson of Peterborough (clause 50): fuller results data, including polling-station turnout.

Enforcement and the Electoral Commission

Lord Pack (after clause 77): let the Commission require information before a formal investigation.

Specific amendments we encourage you to support



Digital campaigning

Lord Russell of Liverpool, with Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (three amendments after clause 73): an electoral advertising code of practice, an advisory committee and enforcement.

Lord Clement-Jones, with the Lord Bishop of Leicester (after **clause 73):** label campaign material generated or materially altered by AI.



Protecting candidates

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (after clause 55): end publication of candidates' home addresses.

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (after clause 84): make domestic abuse offences and protection orders trigger disqualification orders.

Baroness Thornhill (after clause 80 and to clause 81): extend hostility protections to candidates' relatives and staff.

Baroness Thornhill (after clause 84): candidate safety guidance from the Electoral Commission, given to every candidate on nomination.

Baroness Morgan of Cotes, with Lord Carlile of Berriew, Lord Clement-Jones and Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (after clause 84): an Ofcom code of practice on electoral harm, with electoral offences made priority offences under the Online Safety Act.

Baroness Royall of Blaisdon (three amendments after clause 84): a code of conduct for political campaigning, with civil enforcement and a code for each party.

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Registration URL: **fairvote.uk/rsvp**

For more information or a briefing please contact: Kyle Taylor at kyle@fairvote.uk

We are here to help. Please do get in touch!

Defend the Bill's advances. Support amendments that make them effective and address remaining gaps. Contact the relevant organisations listed throughout this document for evidence, technical briefings and help developing amendments.

If you'd like a more detailed, large-print version of this briefing, contact the Fair Vote UK team below and we'll send you a digital version via email.

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