

# Mentions of Oxford and Oxbridge in Parliament

**Date: January 17**

- Commons debate Immigration: Research mention
- Commons debate on NHS Funding: Mention Dr Jebb
- Commons debate on DWP Policies: Mention research
- Commons Second Reading EU Bill: Mention Euratom
- Commons topical question: Antisemitism
- Lords Higher Education and Research Bill, Committee stage, multiple mentions
- Lords debate EU withdrawal: Mention of Oxford EU student and staff meeting

## Commons

### Research

#### **MPs debate Immigration Rules: Spouses and Partners**

Tue, 31 January 2017 | Debate - Adjournment and General

#### **Gavin Newlands (SNP)**

...First, the minimum salary requirement has to be reduced so that it more accurately reflects the wages of all UK citizens, not just the richest. Research conducted by the Migration Observatory at the **University of Oxford** shows that the financial requirement disproportionately affects women, ethnic minorities and those outside London. It is estimated that 41% of people in Scotland would be ineligible to sponsor a non-...

... when we consider that as many as 45% of people in the UK earn less than the required threshold, particularly in areas outside London and the south-east.

Secondly, research conducted by the **University of Oxford** confirms that the policy disproportionately affects particular groups. It found that the minimum income requirement has

“important indirect effects across gender, ethnicity, education, age...

#### **MPs debate NHS and Social Care Funding**

Wed, 11 January 2017 | Debate - Adjournment and General

#### **Andrew Selous (South West Bedfordshire) (Con)**

...although we have a national health service, we do not do enough to keep our fellow citizens

healthy. I would like to see more emphasis placed on the excellent work of Dr Susan Jebb, an academic at the **University of Oxford**. She published an article in The Lancet just before Christmas showing that where GPs offered obese patients a referral to 12 weekly one-hour sessions, there was a significant reduction in the patient...

## **MPs debate DWP Policies and Low-income Households**

Tue, 17 January 2017 | Debate - Adjournment and General

**Neil Gray (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)**

... exponential rise in food banks and the requirement for emergency food aid has been linked to sanctions and cuts to social security by a series of reports, including those by the Poverty Alliance, the **University of Oxford** and GoWell in Glasgow. That shows the harm that Tory choices are causing. When the Chancellor sets his Budget during times of austerity, whether it is Osborne's austerity max or Hammond's austerity a...

## **Education**

### **Access and Influence**

### **Other**

## **Commons Second Reading - European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill**

Tue, 31 January 2017 | Second Reading Debate

### **Chris Philp (Croydon South) (Con)**

I received an email yesterday from Professor John Wheeler, the head of physics at **Oxford University**, who had the very dubious pleasure of being my tutor for four years in the mid-1990s. He is concerned about the implications for his fusion research programme of our leaving Euratom. Is there any way in which we could postpone leaving Euratom by a year or two, and if that is not possible, what assurance will the Secretary of State give Professor Wheeler and his colleagues?

### **David Davis (Con)**

The first thing I would say to my hon. Friend is that there is a two-year timetable, so we are still two years out from this. The Prime Minister has also said very clearly in her industrial strategy and in her speech on Brexit that we intend to support the scientific community and to build as much support for it as we can. When we engage in negotiations after March, we will negotiate with the European Union with the aim of creating a mechanism that will allow the research to go on.

## **Topical Questions 23<sup>rd</sup> January**

### **Craig Whittaker (Calder Valley) (Con)**

During a recent delegation as part of the all-party parliamentary group against antisemitism, it became clear that international parliamentary colleagues are concerned about the rise of hate crime, and in particular anti-Semitism from the left in UK universities. Does my right hon.

Friend agree with me, and indeed with Baroness Royall when she said that Labour does not take anti-Semitism seriously, as seen by the inaction against members of **Oxford University** who were accused of anti-Semitism, and that this has, of course, a wider impact on hate crime in general?

### **Amber Rudd**

I thank my hon. Friend for raising this important matter, particularly during Holocaust Memorial Week. As he will know, the Government published a hate crime action plan to drive forward action to tackle all forms of hate crime, and to enable Departments across the Government to work with police and communities. However, I completely agree with him that all organisations, including universities and political parties, have an obligation to stamp out anti-Semitism wherever it is encountered.

## **Lords Research Education Higher Education and Research Bill**

Lords Committee stage 25<sup>th</sup> January (Day Six)

### **Lord Patten of Barnes (Con)**

Obviously these amendments are relevant to the debate we have just had, and I do not want to speak at length, but I endorse everything that the noble Lord, Lord Hannay, has said. I want to pick up just two points, one of which was made by the noble Lords, Lord Judd and Lord Rees, earlier. It is the huge importance of international students, international academics and postgraduates to the quality of our universities.

The **university** I know best recently came top of the league tables for universities. We were pleased about that and of course we believed the methodology wholeheartedly. In previous years, when we did not believe the methodology quite so enthusiastically, we had come second to Caltech. There are more American students at **Oxford** than at Caltech. Our great universities would not be able to do the spectacular research they do without the academic staff from other countries, without postgraduates in particular, and we are delighted to have so many students from other countries.

### **Lords Committee Stage - Higher Education and Research Bill (Day Five)**

Mon, 23 January 2017 | Committee Stage Debate

#### **Stevenson of Balmacara (Lab)**

However, it also seems to be the case that the Government are trying to say that only an institution in the FE sector can apply for the powers to award just foundation degrees, which seems perverse. If the Government accept my opening premise that we are trying to open up the system to make it more flexible, why is it only in the FE sector that you can find these foundation degrees? Is there something special about them that restricts **Oxford University**, Edinburgh or anyone else with the ambition and the wish to try to make as seamless a proposal for students wishing to enter **university** as possible to be prohibited from offering a

foundation degree because they are not in the FE sector? That seems odd and slightly against what the Minister was saying as he introduced the amendment.

### **Lord Watson of Invergowrie (Lab)**

...education—will surely diminish. We are now entering an era where students dissatisfied with their grades can sue their universities. Improbable as that sounds, only last week the High Court ruled that **Oxford University** had a case to answer, in response to a former student who alleged that what he termed “boring” and “appallingly bad” teaching cost him a first-class degree and the opportunity of higher earnings.br/...

...mise that we are trying to open up the system to make it more flexible, why is it only in the FE sector that you can find these foundation degrees? Is there something special about them that restricts **Oxford University**, Edinburgh or anyone else with the ambition and the wish to try to make as seamless a proposal for students wishing to enter university as possible to be prohibited from offering a foundation degree ...

### **Lords Committee Stage - Higher Education and Research Bill**

Wed, 11 January 2017 | Committee Stage Debate

#### **Baroness Garden of Frognal**

The Government’s justification for the continued policy has been the international rules around reporting of migrant numbers. However, as the **Migration Observatory at Oxford** has made clear, there is a big difference between the migration statistics and the Government’s self-imposed migration target. The amendments do not, however, seek to override the Government’s decision. They simply ask them to put their money where their mouth is by ensuring that the value of these students to universities is made public each year, as the noble Lord, Lord Lucas, has set out in his amendments, too.

Among my amendments, there is one where the provider would have to provide information about the fees charged to international students and, in Amendment 127, the OfS would have to set out in its report,

“the financial contribution of international students to English higher education providers”.

If the Government want to continue to stand in the way of this consensus, they should be made to do so publicly and in the face of statistics. These amendments would therefore play a minor but important role in informing public debate on this issue.

#### **Lord Bilimoria**

My Lords, I shall address the point about part-time and lifelong learning, and speak from my own experience. When I qualified as a chartered accountant, with a degree from India, and with a law degree from Cambridge, I thought that I had had enough education for ever. Then I was introduced to lifelong learning by going to business school and engaging in executive education, which I have since done at Cranfield School of Management, the London Business School and the Harvard Business School. I remember President Clinton saying, “The more you learn, the more you earn”, and one can try to vouch for that.

The encouragement of lifelong learning is so important—it does not stop. Then there is access to lifelong learning for those who missed out on it, for whatever reason. I was the youngest **university** chancellor in the country when I was made chancellor of Thames Valley **University**, now the **University** of West London. At that **university**, which is one of the modern universities, a huge proportion of the students were mature students and learning part-time. You cannot equate a **university** such as that with an **Oxford** or a Cambridge. It is a completely different model, offering access and focusing on—and promoting the concept of—lifelong learning, mature students and part-time learning. Sadly, the funding for part-time learning needs to be looked at, but it is not a matter for this Bill.

### **Lord Willis of Knaresborough (LD)**

My Lords, I did not mean to speak on this part of the Bill, and was absent at Second Reading, but I want to raise a key issue that follows on from the noble Baroness. With previous Acts of Parliament, and when we set up OFFA, we were totally consumed by the whole idea that access to higher education was about getting into **Oxford and Cambridge**, and that has bedevilled the whole system.

What worries me about what is being proposed at the moment—this was referred to in our earlier debate by the noble Lords, Lord Rees and Lord Lucas— is what happens not with individual universities but between universities. Quite often we see students from poorer backgrounds, or indeed from all backgrounds, who gain credits in parts of courses but then move, either with their spouse or because they want to move for work elsewhere, and find that the pre-learning that they worked very hard for is simply not accepted in other universities.

### **Lords Committee Stage - Higher Education and Research Bill (Day 1)**

Mon, 9 January 2017 | Committee Stage Debate

#### **Lord Krebs**

My Lords, it is perhaps not surprising that those of us who are academics are concerned about definitions because one of the things we always teach our students is to define their terms. Hence, I support this amendment which seeks to define what we are talking about. At the same time, we should recognise that over the centuries universities have changed. In England, between the 12th and the 19th centuries, there were just two universities—**Oxford** and Cambridge—which served largely as institutions for educating people for careers in the Church or in canon law. The modern **university** as we understand it, an institution which combines research and teaching, was essentially invented in Germany by Alexander von Humboldt in 1810, when he founded the **University** of Berlin. However, in spite of the changing details of what universities do, they have certain enduring qualities and properties that we should cherish and ensure are retained during the passage of the Bill.

#### **Baroness Deech**

Before the Minister sits down, may I take him back to his statement that there cannot be any interference by the OfS and the Government in the governance of universities because they are autonomous? However, as has often been mentioned this evening, under the 1988 Act **university** commissioners were sent to rip up the charters of **Oxford and Cambridge** colleges, and perhaps of other universities too, in the interests of ending academic tenure. Despite

protests, they were rewritten. It was the Government's will, and no amount of protestations at the time about academic freedom made any difference.

### **Viscount Younger of Leckie**

Let me give what I hope will be further reassurance that when the Office for Students is set up, as set out in the Bill in different clauses, academic autonomy will be exceptionally important. However, if there is a failing institution, the OfS will have the right to step in, but the steps it must take are long and quite onerous. I reassure the House that many steps have to be gone through before it goes down that route. I am sure we will have more debate about that.

### **Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws**

I want to give some comfort to my noble friend Lord Stevenson because I share many of the concerns expressed in his amendment. I am not in favour of for-profit universities: I should make that very clear. The ideal of the **university** is so precious and important to our nation. We should ask ourselves this question: where is a world-class **university** that is for-profit? The answer is that there is not one—not Harvard, Yale, **Oxford** or Cambridge.

### **Lord Smith of Finsbury (Non-affiliated)**

...is weak; that is, in allying the word “must” with the extensive range of subjects. Actually, it is right to put “must” in the Bill in relation to the commitment of a university to academic freedom. If **Oxford University** were to abandon the principles of academic freedom, it would rightly be up in front of the court of public opinion or a court of law.

## **Access and Influence**

### **Other**

#### **Debate: UK Withdrawal from the EU**

26<sup>th</sup> January

### **Baroness Kennedy of the Shaws (Lab)**

I am the head of an **Oxford** college. Our vice-chancellor, Louise Richardson, called a meeting for Europeans working at all levels in the **university**—some were academics, but some worked in staffing and administration and so on. Some 1,700 people turned up, full of anxiety about their future. We should urge the Government to take a unilateral step. That would do a number of things. Any of us who have ever been involved in negotiations know that if you put something out there in the beginning, it wins good will for you in further negotiations. I have no doubt that there will be reciprocity from the other countries of Europe with regard to our citizens living there. But to hesitate at this stage and not to give such an assurance now is wrong. I have heard from firm Brexiteers that they agree that we should act now and not wait until the triggering of Article 50.

