



The Rt Hon Nick Clegg
Deputy Prime Minister,
Lord President of the Council
Cabinet Office
70 Whitehall
London SW1A 2AS

25th May 2010

Dear Deputy Prime Minister

Congratulations on your new appointment and your new role. Last week I had the pleasure of attending your first public speech at the City and Islington College. I have also now had the opportunity to read *The Coalition: Our programme for government*. It is clear to me that the government in general and you in particular have a deep commitment to reforming the business of politics in the United Kingdom. This is an aim that my organisation has great pleasure in supporting.

We in SOLACE have a longstanding commitment to examining how the election process should take place. Some fifteen years ago, prior to my joining SOLACE I, together with the late Brian Redhead and Simon Jenkins, produced the report of the Commission for Local Democracy, examining amongst other things, voting practices. In it we suggested that Governments should examine changes to registers and changes to the processes that enable people to vote. Amongst our recommendations was giving people opportunity to vote at weekends which not only increases turn out but eases people's access to the democratic process, and changes to the registration process allowing access to a central register from many polling areas. We could see no reason why people could not vote in their local supermarket and had many other suggestions.

Notwithstanding some errors that were made in the recent General Election, not least in your own constituency, I believe that the time has come to thoroughly examine the examples above and many other options. We in SOLACE have considerable expertise to offer you in examining how we can have a root and branch reform of both the registration and voting processes. We would happily put together a team to work with whomsoever you wish, to produce a report to put to you on the various options and how they might be implemented. If you would wish to take up this offer please do not hesitate to have one of your staff contact me.

Once again congratulations, and I look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

David Clark

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Director-General

