

Letter-to-MP-2

Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill

Dear _____

I am writing to you on the subject of the Vehicle Technology and Aviation Bill that is currently passing through Parliament (due for a second reading on the 6th March). This Bill in Part 4 Section 23 covers the offer of courses as an alternative to prosecution for Road Traffic offences. That effectively would regulate, and make legal, the use of police waivers and the offer of speed-awareness courses.

The Alliance of British Drivers (ABD) has shown how these arrangements have been abused. Such practices have enabled the police to generate cash to fund their operations and that includes equipment and services that have nothing to do with road safety. In addition it has financed the acquisition and use of more speed cameras. In effect the police have been using the funds so obtained to maintain their establishments and the consequence is that there are clear incentives to the police to raise money in this way. This is a distortion of the justice system.

For the first time in British history this Bill would introduce into English law the concept that it is legal to pay bribes to the police to avoid prosecution for offences.

The evidence on how these arrangements are currently being abused by the police are present on this web site maintained by the ABD: www.speed-awareness.org

A summary in a pdf document is present here:
www.speed-awareness.org/Speed-Awareness-Campaign-Summary.pdf

Although the ABD has called for proper legal regulation of this system, the proposals in the Bill actually make matters worse. There is a provision that any excess over costs must be used for promoting road safety but there is also a provision that "promoting road safety" includes the prevention, detection or enforcement of offences relating to vehicles. So this fixes into law the ability of the police to finance more speed cameras and their operation so as to generate more cash, and so this dubious industry will be expanded as a result. This has nothing to do with road safety and everything to do with empire building by the police.

Indeed the evidence obtained by the ABD shows that the police are diverting the funds raised in this way to other activities and are misreporting the profits generated. This is a natural consequence of the perverse financial incentives that are being created.

Therefore I ask you to oppose that part of the Bill being brought into law in its entirety. Alternatively that Section 90G(5) of Part 3B of the amended Traffic Offenders Act 1998 be changed to redefine the phrase "promoting road safety" so as to exclude the detection or enforcement of offences; or alternatively that under 90G(2) any excess is simply returned to the Crown for use on national road safety education programmes.

I ask you therefore to raise this matter in Parliament by speaking against this part of the Bill and by voting against these provisions unless they are substantially amended.

Yours sincerely

(Include your name and full postal address even in an email to ensure your M.P. will respond)