

Hereditary Peers Bill passes in House of Lords, paving the way for further reform

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- Hereditary peers will no longer have the right to sit and vote in the House of Lords in one of the biggest reforms to Parliament in a generation.
- Fulfilling a key manifesto pledge of the current Government, the Hereditary Peers Bill will ensure that places in the Lords are not reserved for people born into certain families.
- The passage of the Bill completes a process started a quarter of a century ago to remove the hereditary principle from the House of Lords and bring the UK into line with other 21st century democracies.

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The Bill, which was passed on Tuesday evening, fulfills one of the Government's key manifesto pledges and marks the completion of work started over 25 years ago to remove the right for hereditary peers to sit and vote in the House of Lords.

The Government believes that no one should be able to vote on legislation solely on the basis of their inheritance, so reform of this outdated and undemocratic principle has been long overdue.

Leader of the House of Lords, Baroness Smith said:

The Lords plays a vital role within our bicameral Parliament, but nobody should sit in the House by virtue of an inherited title. That is why the government committed to removing the remaining hereditary peerages, completing the reforms that were started over a quarter of a century ago.

Getting this bill through is a major first step towards reform of the Lords, with further changes to follow - including on members' retirement and participation requirements.

Minister for the Cabinet Office, Nick Thomas-Symonds, said:

Hereditary peerages are an archaic and undemocratic principle. I am proud that we have fulfilled a key manifesto pledge of this government.

Our Parliament should always be a place where talents are recognised and merit counts. It should never be a gallery of old boys' networks, nor a place where titles, many of which were handed out centuries ago, hold power over the will of the people.

In making this change, the Government is committed to ensuring that the House can continue to function effectively. The Government has therefore agreed to offer additional life peerages to the Official Opposition and Crossbenchers. As always, it will be for the Opposition to decide which

individuals they wish to nominate for peerages.

The Bill is the first step in wider reform to the House of Lords which, besides Lesotho's Senate, is the only legislative body that still contains a hereditary element. The Government believes that there should not be places in the second chamber of Parliament reserved for those who were born into certain families.

Currently, 92 excepted hereditary peers, which include a range of Dukes, Viscounts, and Earls, can vote on legislation in the Lords. While over 600 hereditary peers were removed from the Lords in the House of Lords Act 1999, 92 were retained as an interim measure.

The Bill will come into effect at the end of this session of Parliament, after which no peer will be a member of the House of Lords on the basis of their hereditary peerage.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/hereditary-peers-bill-passes-in-house-of-lords-paving-the-way-for-further-reform>