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**Freedom of Information and the Royal Family:**

As constituents may know, the Royal Household is not included in the Freedom of Information Act's definition of a public authority. I know there have been concerns that the Act includes a complete exemption for communications of both the Sovereign and the first and second in line to the throne, as well as qualified exemptions for other members of the Royal Family and the Royal Household.

I understand that the Government currently has no plans to amend the Freedom of Information Act to remove these exemptions. I recognise that this will disappoint some constituents and I hope that the Justice Secretary considers the points raised.

More widely, I appreciate that there are strongly held views about the monarchy and I note some constituents position on this issue. However, I support our constitutional monarchy and the virtues it represents, such as discipline, sacrifice and public service. As an institution, its roots are firmly embedded in our history.

Furthermore, it is clear that the monarchy is a source of deep pride for many people in our country. All surveys of public opinion on this issue show that only a minority of people favour replacing it. There are no plans from the current Government for changes to the institution of the monarchy. However, I will certainly bear in mind the points some constituents have raised if, and when, this issue is next debated in Parliament.

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