



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Karl M^cCartney JP MP
House of Commons
London
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22 February 2016

Dear Constituent,

As your elected Member of Parliament, I have been asked by many of my Constituents over the past number of months, and more so in recent weeks, and days, about how I will cast my vote in the forthcoming European Union Referendum. Firstly let me say I am loyal to my Party, but I am also loyal to my Country - that I am proud and lucky to be a part of.

As one of the original 81 Members of the Conservative Party in 2011 to have defied my Party Whip, and voted in the House of Commons to let the people of our Country have an EU Referendum, I am very pleased that my Party and our Prime Minister have delivered that promise following the 2015 General Election. I believe it helped us win and become a majority Government as we were the only Political Party to have offered such a momentous decision to all the people of our proud nation – except those who are paying their debt to society and reside at Her Majesty's pleasure in our prisons.

I have decided, due to the disappointment generated by the lack of changes renegotiated in the current European Union Deal, that I will be voting for the United Kingdom to leave in June as I feel our great nation will be more prosperous and successful outside of the European Union as it is now, and how it will be in the future.

As a matter of respect to all of my constituents I have set out my reasons below. I realise of course that there will be a number of people across Lincoln, Bracebridge Heath, Skellingthorpe and Waddington who will campaign and vote for us to stay in the European Union. I am sure that some of these individuals may be disappointed with my decision, but the beauty of a referendum is that we all have one vote each. My vote counts in exactly the same way as everyone else's, whatever their view, and mine, might be.

What makes this Constituency the best in the Country though is the respect most of us have for each other and I hope that the debate will be conducted in an honourable and respectful manner. We are all good friends inside the Conservative Party in the main, and I want to make sure we remain good friends, whatever the result.

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My three tests for a better Britain

During the General Election campaign last year, a key manifesto commitment of mine was a commitment to have an In-Out referendum on whether we should leave or stay in the European Union. In fact, I had campaigned for a referendum as soon as I became a Member of Parliament in 2010 and was one of the Conservative MP's who had voted to try secure such a referendum as soon as I was elected. It is worthy of a reminder that the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats campaigned against a referendum and even now, they still believe and collectively hold this negative view.

As a Country we had not had a referendum since 1975. This means anyone under 59 in age has never been given a say in our relationship with the European Union - and so much has changed in 41 years. It was even called the European Union Economic Community back then, no mention, of course, of the political union it has now become.

Following the European Union Deal the Prime Minister has placed before us, I will be voting and campaigning for us to leave. I have no criticism at all about his negotiations that he has led, as it is clear to me that he wanted a fundamental change in our relationship but the European Union does not want us to have it.

Sadly, the European Union Deal, as is, does not go anywhere near far enough in addressing the fundamental change that I, and I believe the vast majority of my Constituents in Lincoln, want over the way the European Union currently operates now, let alone in the future. This change is not about Europe itself, the European people or individual European countries, it is about how both Lincoln and the United Kingdom can be even better – economically, culturally and socially. My conclusion is that leaving the European Union will bring more benefits to Lincoln, The City of London and our national economy, and the United Kingdom as a whole, than staying in.

I have set out my reasons briefly below and these are based on three key tests. These are tests I have always measured my stance against.

1) The need for stronger controls on immigration and our borders

There has been much debate about in-work benefits especially the outrageous situation where we have to pay child benefit to children of European Union nationals working here, even if their children are still living abroad. In many respects, this has been a red herring because for the most part European Union nationals coming to the UK want to work and are not here just to access benefits, overly generous as they are.

The key for me is whether we have full control on who can live and work here. This Country is filling up fast and every year our population grows by the size of Nottingham's. This places a huge strain on housing, public services like schools and hospitals in Lincoln and Lincolnshire, and also we have to take into account how we can integrate so many people so quickly into the British Way of Life. We also have a problem with the number of people who are not European Union nationals but have managed to enter into the European Union somehow and are now wanting to come here. The scenes at Calais are testament to this.



Of course, we want people with skills and experience to come here if we do not have those skills available. There is a feeling that perhaps we should bring in a points system like Australia has. In many respects this is the nub of the problem. We can look at different types of immigration and border control systems 'til our heart's content, but unless we have ultimate control of our borders and can decide who lives and works here, it is a fruitless study.

We need to have complete control on and of our borders and also who lives and works here. By remaining a member of the European Union we cannot gain that control.

2) An increased ability to choose not to introduce regulations and decisions that are not in the interest of the British people or British business

Having been a businessman before I became a MP, I know that without businesses of all shapes and sizes, our Country would not be the success it is and the high standard of living and public services we enjoy would not be possible. So why would we place obstacles in the way of those who set up and run successful companies bar ensuring a good level of employment and consumer protection? This should be the case, but it is not what we have now.

Every time I visit businesses in my constituency of Lincoln, the level of red tape, bureaucracy, regulations and their associated costs are always top of the agenda. Nearly all come from Brussels, whose attitude seems to be that business should be controlled and not allowed to flourish. This is not something I can stand idly by and let continue.

Lincoln, as well as being the jewel in the crown in this part of the United Kingdom, is in many respects an international City with so many of our businesses selling their goods and services abroad, and of course, so many people work for international companies based here.

The European Union is a vital exporting area for us with many people in the City and the County being employed on that basis but this will not change if we leave. I do not believe that it is true that leaving the European Union will put Lincoln jobs at risk. The rest of the European Union sells more to us than we sell to them so it is inconceivable that they would want to place any restrictions on us that could be reciprocated.

The key term I come back to is International. The United Kingdom is a global Country. It looks outward not just to the European Union but also to the Commonwealth, the USA and the whole world. We trade with anyone who wants to trade with us. However, not only are we burdened by rules and regulations from Brussels, our membership of the European Union also prevents us from setting up our own trade agreements with the rest of the world. By being free of EU bureaucracy we can set our own regulations, decide on our own agreements and ultimately sell more of our fine goods and services to more people around the world.

I therefore truly believe that if we leave the European Union we will become more economically prosperous.

3) A clear answer as to who actually governs Britain – the British people or the European Union?

Lincoln is one of the United Kingdom's most historic cities, one of the last remaining homes of the Magna Carta, the foundation stone of modern democracy and law across the world. The fact that last year we celebrated its 800th anniversary and the year after we are able to decide who we are governed by, is a historical link that we should not forget.

I had hoped that the European Union Deal would fundamentally change our relationship with the European Union so that our Westminster Parliament which represents every single person in our great Country would be the ultimate arbiter on the laws and rules that govern us. Only British people should ultimately decide by what laws they live by – they know what is in their individual best interest and the best interests of the whole Country now and in the future.

The growing rush to a political union from the vast majority of the Countries in the European Union is understandable, it is why so many joined in the first place. It is not for Britain though, with our different history, culture and trading pattern. Ever since the Maastricht Treaty some 25 years ago, subsequent treaties and the introduction of the Euro, no matter how much we have tried, we have been drawn ever more towards a political union. It is almost like there is a magnet based in Brussels continually drawing us, and everyone else, in.

We have to now make a decision whether we feel a positive future for the United Kingdom lies with laws being decided in Brussels, or Westminster. My view is that it has to be Westminster.

I am also a signatory for the Fresh Start Project of Conservative Members of Parliament.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wicks', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.