

Jane Hunt MP



House of Commons

17 March 2021

Dear local residents,

Thank you to those who have contacted me about the *Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill*.

Firstly, you may be interested to know that I [spoke](#) in support of this Bill during its Second Reading on Monday. I did so because this Bill will introduce a comprehensive package of important measures to protect the public and keep local communities safe – the first duty of any government. To name just a few, it will help manage the risks posed by terrorist offenders and serious criminals, including sex offenders, protect children and young people, increase police numbers, keep our fantastic emergency workers safe, and tackle unauthorised encampments as well as criminal damage to memorials. It will also help reduce reoffending, which is an issue I have been pursuing since becoming an MP.

That being said, I recognise that some local residents are concerned about certain aspects of this Bill, in particular the elements pertaining to protests following the recent vigil for Sarah Everard. Like many across the country, I am deeply shocked and saddened by this case. My thoughts continue to be with Sarah's family and loved ones at this devastating time. Rightly, the Prime Minister has been clear that all the answers to this horrifying crime must be found and I fully support this sentiment.

I also share local residents' concerns about the images from the vigil at Clapham Common. These were very upsetting and I understand that both the Home Secretary and the Prime Minister have spoken to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police about this. As you may be aware, a comprehensive review has been announced to ensure that the right lessons are learnt but it is also very important that we fully understand the circumstances of the police's involvement before we pass judgement. I will continue to monitor developments in this area closely.

It is also the case that, in the midst of the frustration and anger surrounding the vigil, we must not lose sight of the important reasons behind the protest measures in the Bill. I would like to emphasise that they are not about curtailing people's right to gather together and protest peacefully - a fundamental part of our democracy – rather they are to ensure that, when people decide to protest, they do not cause extensive disruption.

You will be aware that, over recent years, there have been a number of instances where protests have prevented people from getting on with their daily lives, hampered the free press and blocked access to Parliament. I know from my previous conversations with local

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residents that this has been as much of a concern to you as it has been to me. I, therefore, welcome that the Bill will strengthen police powers to safely manage non-violent protests which threaten public order and cause severe disruption.

Finally, I note that some local residents have raised concerns about scrutiny. This Bill has been a long time in the making, with much of its content having been made public beforehand to ensure that individuals and stakeholders had an opportunity to share their views, including through the [Sentencing White Paper](#) published last year. Of course, the Bill is also subject to the usual scrutiny in Parliament, with MPs having spent two days this week debating it at Second Reading. The Bill will now proceed to Committee Stage at which it will be scrutinised in greater detail by a committee of MPs. If you would like to follow the passage of the Bill through Parliament, you can do so [here](#).

I hope that this information is helpful. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jane".

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