

# Compassion in Politics:

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# Threefold Crisis

- ▶ Rise in Violence
- ▶ Growing mental health crisis amongst parliamentarians
- ▶ Democratic backsliding and loss of public trust in politicians

**Police are investigating around 3000 reports of harassment and 23 death threats to politicians made in the last 18 months. (May 2024)**



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## Exit Survey of MPs Leaving Parliament 2024

- One third cited fear of violence and abuse in their decision to stand down
- 70% said mental health had been affected
- Global picture mental health worse than emergency workers during the pandemic (Apolitical Foundation)



# Factors cited in exit interviews

- ▶ Frustration of backbench role – only 5% of legislation initiated by backbenchers
- ▶ Frustration of constituents with their failure to deliver on election promises
- ▶ Lack of public understanding of what politicians do
- ▶ Reductive nature of public debate impacting policy
- ▶ Archaic processes leading to inefficiency
- ▶ Working hours and distance away from home
- ▶ Absence of adequate mental health support
- ▶ Abuse on social media

# TRUST IN POLITICIANS (UK)

- Trust in Politicians to tell the truth is 9%
- Lowest since records began, lower even than during expenses scandal
- 2% of those aged 25 to 34 year-olds consider politicians to be truthful



# Modernisation Recommendations

- Establish a new requirement for honesty in politics, enforced by law.
- Change what public see of Parliament by banning booing, heckling and jeering in parliamentary debates
- Introduce electronic voting.
- Job Shares and hybrid working for MPs.
- End 'talking out' of Private Members Bills.
- House Business Committee to allow more backbench and opposition legislation
- Replace Whipping system with a more modern system of workplace discipline
- A gold standard independent HR function.



# Role of Law – Preventing Political Deception





# Role of Law - Misogyny a Hate Crime



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# Social Media Reform

Make social media platforms publishers

Not about free speech

Need to act before full force of AI is unleashed



“ when the speaker of the House of Commons said men could take the ties off the world of fallen and to be absolutely honest, and maternity leave, paternity leave, all those things. The House of Commons has been late in coming to these things. But absolutely, it has got to change, because what we're looking at is not individual political parties or even the government of the country. It's about democracy. ”

Ann Milton, former Conservative Party Deputy Whip

# Thank you

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