



HOUSE OF COMMONS

14th January 2019

Dear Loughborough Constituent,

Tomorrow the House of Commons will hold one of the most important and contentious votes it has seen in the last few decades. As your Member of Parliament, a position I've been privileged to hold for the last 8 years, I must decide whether to support the Prime Minister's draft Withdrawal Agreement and the political declaration for a future framework between the UK and EU, or not.

My role as your representative means I have to balance lots of different views on this draft agreement and Brexit generally. Some people tell me that I should ignore the views of anyone who didn't vote to Leave the EU - because Leave won a majority in the country of those who voted in 2016. In this constituency the vote was almost tied – the House of Commons Library estimates that we voted 50.1% to Leave. This is one of the closest votes in the country. And, at the end of the day, I'm elected to represent everyone living locally.

I believe that as your elected representative I owe it to you, to decide how I vote, using my experience over the last 8 years as your MP. I also need to take into account all the letters, e-mails, messages and conversations I've had about Brexit since 2016. And I must also use my judgment about what will produce the best outcome for you and this constituency.

I am very grateful for all the correspondence I've had from you since the referendum on Brexit. Most of it is heartfelt, passionate and thoughtful. Some people I've heard from multiple times. Many say that they've never written to their MP before but they had to on this issue because they felt so strongly. Of course, it is still true that I haven't heard from the vast, vast majority of constituents. I represent at least 79,000 registered constituents (and many more who aren't old enough or eligible to register but I'm still their MP) and I've heard from around 2.5% of constituents in total.

In recent weeks the messages I've heard about the vote have fallen into three distinct categories – reject the draft agreement and vote for a second referendum, reject the draft agreement and either push for a re-negotiation or accept a 'no deal' outcome or vote for the draft agreement, however imperfect it is. These three scenarios cannot be easily reconciled. It is a great sadness to me that over two years after the referendum result Brexit remains so divisive and the country so divided.

So, having read all the messages you've sent I thought it would be helpful to tell you, in this letter, what I've been thinking and how I've decided to vote.

The Remain campaign, which I supported in 2016, did not win and over 17 million people voted to Leave the EU. I was clear from Day 1 that I would accept that result. It was a vote to Leave, but not a vote about how to leave. I've been determined that I would support a deal which means the UK stops being a member of the EU in March 2019. The deal should mean that we leave the



EU's political institutions and the European Court of Justice. But I wanted to see a deal which does not fatally undermine our economy.

I have been clear, for reasons set out on my website, that I do not support a second referendum. I also want to avoid a damaging 'no deal' outcome. Evidence given to MPs shows that a 'no deal' Brexit would cause great uncertainty and disruption to employers, our public services, EU citizens living here and UK citizens living in the EU. A 'no deal' Brexit would weaken our economy and I believe it would make securing a long-term relationship with our closest neighbours in Europe much harder.

I've mentioned the many conversations I've had with constituents and I want to mention two I've had this weekend. On Friday I met with a resident, who suffers from Parkinson's and needs an absolutely reliable supply of her medicines in order to manage daily life. She wanted to know what the Government is doing about stockpiling drugs supplies and if she needs to stockpile too.

On Saturday I met a constituent who runs a small business just outside Loughborough. He employs contractors to fit his products and he imports tens of thousands of pounds worth of materials from Germany each month. He relies on trucks being able to get on, roll off ferries without delay and the trucks come straight from the port to his warehouse. He can order at 6pm one night and have a delivery the next day. Any disruption would have an almost immediate impact, not just on his business but all the other small businesses and tradesmen he deals with and employs.

These aren't case studies dreamt up for a focus group but real constituents who are getting anxious. I don't want to see constituents worried about the supply of their medicines or put people's employment and livelihoods at risk. But equally I am a democrat who doesn't believe in overturning votes. So, if I have the opportunity to vote for a deal which means the UK leaves the EU, in accordance with the 2016 vote, but preserves essential trade and supply relationships then I will opt for it.

And that is why I will support the Prime Minister's draft Withdrawal Agreement on Tuesday. I don't know if the House of Commons will support it. As I write this letter I suspect it won't. If not then I will work with MPs on all sides of the House (because Brexit should not be a party political issue just as both campaigns in 2016 had cross party support) to see if we can find a model for a deal which fulfils the criteria I have set out above.

I hope this letter is helpful and you can find out lots more about my views and work on Brexit by looking at this page on my website: www.nickymorgan.org/campaigns/brexit

Yours sincerely,

The Rt Hon. Nicky Morgan MP