

Dear friends

Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful break and are refreshed and energised for the fight ahead.

Overview of amendments to the Bill

The next stage of our work is underway following the Nationality and Borders Bill passing its second reading in the House of Lords where Peers voiced their anger and concerns about the proposed legislation. See the full transcript [here](#). Parliamentary leads from our member organisations worked behind the scenes to brief Peers with our arguments, resulting in several Peers quoting directly from our joint [parliamentary briefing](#).

The bill will now go to Committee Stage on 27th January where Peers will have the chance to debate each amendment and press for responses from the Government. Usually there are no votes at this stage as Members seek to sound out what Ministers make of their proposed changes. Voting takes place during the Report Stage, which we expect in the middle of March.

Next steps

As you know we are focused on two core priorities: 1) opposing the principle of treating refugees differently based on how they arrived here rather than their need for protection, and so are asking for the removal of the offending clause. 2) the introduction of a target to resettle 10,000 refugees a year. We explained the rationale behind these two amendments in our [Strategy for Engaging your MP and Key Asks guidance document](#) (items 1 & 2 from page 4 onwards).

1. **Differentiated treatment:** We're encouraged that an amendment to remove Clause 11 has just been tabled by both the Liberal Democrats and Labour front bench in the Lords. We're now focussing on bringing additional cross-party support to help inflict a Government defeat that signals the strength of opinion. To do so we'll need Labour's firm backing.
2. **Resettlement target:** We are working to secure Conservative sponsors for an amendment on a resettlement target which can get sufficient numbers to win a vote.

In addition, we will need your support to lobby MPs to vote to accept amendments after the bill completes its final stages towards the end of March (TBC). We will share follow-up actions and suggested wording that reflects the latest developments, and to warm-up MPs to our calls.

Valentine's Day with orange hearts

Valentine's Day is a great opportunity to show your community's heart. And the timing is perfect just ahead of when the bill comes back to the House of Commons.

Many MPs and the Home Secretary are frequently criticised by a vocal minority for the government's inability to close the borders post-Brexit. We're hoping that Valentine's Day (and that week) will give us another opportunity to show MPs that the vast majority of the UK public want a more compassionate approach to refugees. Given the new restrictions around COVID in some parts of the UK we may need to be even more imaginative in how we do this.

Next week we'll send a menu of options to support your plans. For example, we'll include ideas for Valentine's Day cards for your MPs with messages about the amendments we want them to support.

Keep up your great work. Together we are making an impact (as you can see [from our Chair's message at the end of last year](#))!

Warmest wishes for a healthy and heart-filled new year.

Julia Powell

on behalf of the Together With Refugees team