

## **Gambling Bill rebellion**

PHILIP COWLEY and MARK STUART\*

Last night's rebellion at the Second Reading of the Gambling Bill reduced the Government's majority to 74. The Government won fairly comfortably, by 286 votes to 212, but a total of 30 Labour MPs voted against the Government. The other three votes during last night's business saw no Labour MPs voting against the Government.

At Second Reading, one other Labour MP – David Taylor – voted in both lobbies to cast a deliberate abstention, something he similarly did on the subject of University top-up fees in January. Taylor was joined in his abstention by at least 20 Labour MPs.

The 30 rebels who cross-voted are listed below. All have previously voted against the Government during this Parliament. They include many (though not all) of the most rebellious Labour MPs. Of the top 20 Labour rebels during the 2001 Parliament, ten voted against the Government last night. A further eight abstained. Just two of the most rebellious 20 Labour rebels – Lynne Jones and Neil Gerrard – voted with the Government. Indeed, although most (though not all) of the other MPs have a less dramatic record of rebellion, most are still amongst the more frequent rebels. The 'average' Labour rebel has rebelled five times during the 2001 Parliament, and all but four of the 30 had previously rebelled more than the average.

A third of the rebels were ex-members of the Blair Government, including two Cabinet Ministers, Frank Dobson and Clare Short.

This is the latest in a line of medium to large rebellions to take place at Second Reading. Prior to 2001 it was much less common to see such sizeable rebellions at Second Reading, with MPs preferring to criticise measures during the Second Reading debate but then vote with the Government (or at most abstain) when it came to the vote itself. It has now become much more common to see a rebellion at Second Reading, even when there is little or no chance of defeating the Government, with the expectation that this will help to pressurise the Government into giving further concessions. During the Gambling Bill's Second Reading debate, one of the rebels, Frank Field, concluded by predicting that the Bill would not be defeated, but added: 'What we need is a large vote against and an even bigger abstention, so that when we come to the Report stage the Government hand is so weakened that our wish will carry the day'. Previous experience from the 2001 Parliament, however, suggests that the Government will offer sufficient concessions between Second Reading and Report to persuade enough of the rebels to vote for the measure in any later vote.

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\* Both authors are based at the University of Nottingham. This briefing note draws on research funded by the Economic and Social Research Council, and is available from [www.revolts.co.uk](http://www.revolts.co.uk)

**The 30 Labour MPs who voted against the Second Reading of the Gambling Bill were:**

David Chaytor  
Jeremy Corbyn  
Jim Cousins  
Denzil Davies  
Frank Dobson  
David Drew  
Frank Field  
Mark Fisher  
Win Griffiths  
John Grogan  
David Hinchliffe  
Kate Hoey  
Kelvin Hopkins  
Alan Hurst  
Jon Owen Jones  
Terry Lewis  
John McDonnell  
Andrew Mackinlay  
Alice Mahon  
David Marshall  
Austin Mitchell  
Gordon Prentice  
Ken Purchase  
Brian Sedgemore  
Clare Short  
Dennis Skinner  
Llew Smith  
Robert Wareing  
Betty Williams  
David Winnick

*Note:* One other Labour MP – David Taylor – voted in both lobbies to cast a deliberate abstention, something he similarly did on the subject of University top-up fees. Jeremy Corbyn has variously been cited as voting in both lobbies but did in fact only cast a single vote, against the Government.