

## Government Majority Slashed to 25 over ID Cards Bill

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Tuesday 18 October saw the Government suffer the largest rebellion of this Parliament so far when 25 Labour MPs opposed the Third Reading of the Identity Cards Bill.

The Government's majority was more than halved to 25, the lowest so far in this Parliament.

Last night's rebellion was also the largest yet seen on the issue of identity cards, both in this and in the previous Parliament, surpassing the 22 Labour MPs who voted against the Bill's programme motion in June this year.

This short briefing paper details the rebellions and the rebels – as well as explaining why the government's majority is not being reduced further.

### The rebellions

A total of 32 Labour backbenchers took part in six separate rebellions against the Government on 18 October. As well as the Third Reading rebellion, 23 Labour MPs supported an amendment in the name of Neil Gerrard during the Report stage of the Bill that would have made it possible for people to apply for a passport without having to submit their details for the ID cards database. Gerrard accused the Government of 'creeping compulsion', despite a manifesto pledge that the ID cards scheme would initially be voluntary. His amendment failed by 310 votes to 278, but cut the Government's majority to 32. Andy Love, the MP for Edmonton, also cast his first vote against the Government since becoming a backbencher.

Another sizeable rebellion took place over the cost of ID cards, 18 Labour backbenchers supporting a Conservative amendment that would have made identity cards free of charge. Sir Gerald Kaufman appears to have abstained on this division by voting in both lobbies.

Earlier in the afternoon, nine Labour MPs supported a Conservative amendment that would have restricted the scope of the National Identity register to those facts about individuals 'who reasonably require proof'; eight Labour backbenchers supported a Liberal Democrat motion that the Bill be recommitted to a Select Committee; and three hardcore Labour opponents of the Bill – Dr Lynne Jones, Bob Marshall-Andrews and Clare Short – opposed the Bill's third programme motion.

Meanwhile, Respect's George Galloway voted against the ID Cards Bill on four occasions last night, including Third Reading, taking his tally of votes against the Government so far this Parliament to nine. The Independent MP, Peter Law also voted against the Government on two occasions, taking his tally of anti-Government votes to five.

So far, the Identity Cards Bill has seen 33 Labour MPs defy the Government (Frank Cook being the only Labour MP to vote against the Bill in June not to cast some kind of vote against the Government last night), enough rebels to have

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reduced the Government's majority to single figures, and perilously close to the critical figure of 36 required to bring about a defeat.

However, the Government survived comfortably by repeating the whipping tactics of the last two Parliaments: encouraging Labour backbenchers not to oppose all aspects of the Bill at the same time. For example, three of the eighteen MPs worried about the cost of ID cards – Michael Connarty, David Drew and David Hamilton – did not vote against any other part of the Bill. Similarly, Martin Caton, Andy Love and Dennis Skinner only rebelled on the issue of submitting details for the ID cards database. Others were persuaded (or minded) only to vote against the principle of the legislation. Albert Owen cast his only dissenting vote on the Bill so far at Third Reading, while Diane Abbott and Gwyneth Dunwoody confined their rebellious votes to Second Reading, Third Reading and the other major rebellion on the Bill's first programme motion. A full list of all the rebels so far on the Bill is given in the table below.

The rebellions of 18 October mean that the Government has suffered a total of 14 backbench rebellions this Parliament, averaging 11 MPs per rebellion, and involving a total of 38 Labour MPs.

## ID card Labour rebels

<i>Name of MP</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Prog. No. 1</i>	<i>Money</i>	<i>Prog No. 3</i>	<i>Recommittal</i>	<i>Proof</i>	<i>Passport</i>	<i>Cost</i>	<i>3rd Reading</i>
Abbott, Diane	X	X							X
Caton, Martin							X		
Clapham, Michael							X	X	X
Clark, Katy	X	X			X		X	X	X
Connarty, Michael								X	
Cook, Frank	X	X							
Corbyn, Jeremy	X	X	X			X		X	X
Drew, David								X	
Dunwoody, Gwyneth	X	X							X
Fisher, Mark	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Flynn, Paul	X	X					X	X	X
Gerrard, Neil		X					X		X
Gibson, Ian		X					X	X	X
Hamilton, David								X	
Hoey, Kate	X	X			X		X	X	X
Hopkins, Kelvin	X	X	X				X	X	X
Jackson, Glenda	X	X				X	X		X
Jones, Lynne	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Kaufman, Sir Gerald								A	
Love, Andy							X		
Marshall-Andrews, Bob	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
McDonnell, John	X	X				X	X	X	X
Mitchell, Austin		X				X			
Owen, Albert									X
Riordan, Linda	X	X			X		X		X

Short, Clare	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Simpson, Alan	X	X				X	X	X	X
Skinner, Dennis							X		
Smith, Geraldine					X			X	X
Smith, John	X						X		X
Taylor, David	A	X					X		X
Wareing, Bob	X	X					X	X	X
Winnick, David	X						X		X
Wood, Mike	X	X					X		X

*Note:* X indicates a vote against the Government; A indicates a double vote, usually a deliberate abstention.