



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dear Prime Minister,

15th November 2018

It is with a profoundly heavy heart that I tender my resignation as Parliamentary Private Secretary in the Department of Education, as I cannot support the Withdrawal Agreement which you have agreed with the EU.

It has been an honour to serve in your Government both in education and previously as PPS in the Ministry of Defence. I will continue to speak up on all those matters close to my heart around the armed forces covenant and special educational needs, to try to move policy decisions forwards in the future.

I have struggled for months to continue to give you my support on Brexit, as you battled through the most difficult of public negotiations to find a new relationship with the EU after we have left next year. Despite my own convictions on Brexit, I have always been a pragmatist and understood that there would likely be areas of mutually agreed future partnership which I would not be wholly supportive of, but could live with and justify to my constituents.

Sadly, the deal which you and your Cabinet have approved is not one which I can support. It is now clear to me that the negotiations have been built on the UK trying to appease the EU and we have allowed ourselves to be led into a deal which is unacceptable to the 17.4 million voters who asked for us to step away from the EU project and become an independent nation once again.

As an MP with a historic and active fishing community, the policy framework proposed in the draft agreement published last night would prevent the UK from independently negotiating access and quota shares, and would mean that the UK would become an independent coastal state in name only.

As an MP bordering Scotland, the regulatory framework agreement for Northern Ireland is very important to me, and I cannot support the position the EU agreement takes. I believe that it poses a real threat to the stability and integrity of the Union. The indefinite backstop arrangement agreed is also unacceptable, since it leaves the UK permanently trapped in a customs union, which will restrict forever our trade prospects. I cannot agree to a deal in which my country will have its unique innovative spirit crushed by removing the great opportunity of competitive advantage for the decades ahead.

Some would say well just agree the treaty as it is now then bin it later. But I don't believe in that way of doing business - if we sign a treaty I want us to stand by it. I believe we must protect the Brexit mandate by trying to secure a deal which understands the spirit of the referendum, or we must have the leadership courage to deliver a WTO deal and work on a trade agreement later.

It has been an honour and a privilege to serve my country in your Government.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Marie

Member of Parliament for Berwick-upon-Tweed

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