

C01E033

Mark Cazaly



Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to you with regard to the MPs Expenses Consultation. One aspect of the consultation paper which particularly worries me is section 8.10 which refers to the use and payment of interns in MPs' offices. I am currently undertaking an internship with the Parliamentary Resources Unit as part of a Masters Degree course at university and as such was expecting no financial reward for being here; I already receive financial assistance from the state by acquiring a first class education which is heavily subsidised. Many students spend the whole academic year studying on campus and are charged heavily for doing so, the opportunity to get away from university life and experience life in Westminster is one of which many of my peers are envious. The opportunity I have been given is one which few of my contemporaries are able to take advantage of due to university commitments and as such I feel I am in a privileged position. Should the panel decide to proceed with a policy of enforcing minimum-wage and employment legislation, I fear that the benefits I bring as a humble intern would not be worth the immense cost to my department of a full-time wage and as a result my position here may be foreclosed. This situation may well apply to hundreds of Parliamentary interns who are quite happy with the arrangements as they are and would not look kindly on being asked to leave due to the imposition of a minimum wage which they are quite happy to do without. The benefits that working with the PRU brings far outweigh any financial reimbursement as the skills I am learning and the general way-of-the-world knowledge I am achieving stand me in good stead for the rest of my life.

With regard to my fellow interns that are undertaking this internship of their own accord rather than as part of a degree programme, the only other option available to them is to remain out of work until they are able to find a job (not an easy task given the current climate). This means remaining at home, learning very little and still claiming around £50 a week from the taxpayer in the form of Jobseekers Allowance. For me it is obvious which of these options is most beneficial to society as a whole and the individuals concerned.

I appreciate that your task is not an easy one and there will be differing opinions from many quarters but I sincerely hope that the points I have raised are taken into account when deciding on the matter I have discussed and that your panel carefully considers the unintended consequences of any change to the status-quo.

Yours sincerely,

Mark Cazaly