



**HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Miss Lucy Rigby  
Lincoln Labour Party  
Grafton House  
32 Newland  
Lincoln  
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KM/MB

13 May 2014

*Dear Miss Rigby,*

I am writing in response to your recent email regarding your Labour Party's amendment to the Consumer Rights Bill to artificially restrict letting agents' fees. I have just returned from the Chamber and voting lobbies of the House of Commons, having proudly voted against this proposal, and I would like to share with you my rationale for doing so.

Labour's proposed policies on letting agents' fees could have had far-reaching unintended consequences. In the past few days I have been contacted by a number of letting agents from across my City of Lincoln Constituency who inform me they believe the fees would be passed on to landlords and hence all rents would rise as a result. This could distort the market and all renters would suffer.

Many of the people I represent in my Lincoln constituency cannot afford to pay more rent. Labour's half-baked plans would lead to fewer properties being available and rents increasing. I therefore, like any right-minded individual, cannot support them.

The artificial freeze that you propose also flies in the face of sound economic policy. As a nation, we should not institute damaging and misguided elements of central state planning which are reminiscent of the damaging socialism of 1970's Britain that the Conservative Party fought with great success under our Country's only female Prime Minister, Margaret (later Baroness) Thatcher. The idea that you can simply abolish costs is nonsensical, entirely naive, and is akin to printing vast amounts of currency and not expecting a decline in its value – I can see why as a Parliamentary Candidate of the fiscally inept Ed Miliband you are attracted to such a policy. Sadly, it is clear that today's Labour Party - the same Labour Party you are misguidedly inviting my City of Lincoln Constituents to support - has learnt nothing from the past.

The Conservative-led Government is already taking action to improve redress for tenants concerning complaints, and letting agents are already required to declare their fees on their literature. I would add that our Help to Buy schemes have already assisted over 27,000 households to buy their own home, continuing our sound Conservative objective to create, as far as possible, a Property Owning Democracy.

Finally, as you have chosen to share your email, which you sent both as a Constituent and as Labour's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate, with the media, I have taken the liberty to share both your email and my response with selected media in Lincolnshire and various letting agents, as well as those involved in the housing sector in Lincoln, many of whom I know profoundly disagree with this populist gimmick that you and the Labour Party are proposing.

Of course if you continue renting your current property in Lincoln after May 2015, maybe we could revisit this subject you so very kindly raised, and have given me the opportunity to respond too.

*Yours sincerely,*

**Westminster**

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**Lincoln**

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