

Co-Presidents

The Rt Hon Sir
Lindsay Hoyle MP
Speaker of the
House of Commons

The Rt Hon the Lord
McFall of Alcluith
Lord Speaker

The Rt Hon Jonathan Reynolds MP
Parliamentary Secretary to the
Treasury (Chief Whip)
House of Commons
Westminster
London, SW1A 0AA

24 November 2025

Dear Mr Reynolds,

Budget 2025: Use of an Amendment of the Law Motion

I am writing on behalf of the Hansard Society to seek your reassurance regarding the form of the first Ways and Means motion that the Government intends to table following this Wednesday's Budget Statement.

As you know, only the first Ways and Means motion is capable of amendment, and even then, only within the constitutional limits set by the financial initiative of the Crown. Within these boundaries, however, the form of the motion has a significant impact not on the scope of the Budget debate itself but on the scope of amendments to the subsequent Finance Bill.

If the Government tables an **Income Tax (Charge) motion**, the ability of backbenchers and the Opposition to propose amendments at Committee stage of the Finance Bill is confined to matters relating specifically to the annual income tax charge. This has the effect of substantially narrowing the scope for Members to raise a range of matters pertaining to the public finances.

By contrast, tabling an **Amendment of the Law motion** – the long-standing practice prior to November 2017 – enables MPs to scrutinise the Finance Bill and propose a broader range of amendments.

Historically, such a motion ensured that the Committee stage of the Finance Bill remained a genuinely political and substantive examination of the Government's financial plans.

As you yourself noted when speaking for the Opposition in Committee on the Finance Bill on 27 November 2018, the absence of an Amendment of the Law motion reduces Committee deliberations to "less of a political conversation and more of a technical one".

In October 2021, the then Chair of the Procedure Committee, Dame Karen Bradley MP raised the issue in writing with the then Chancellor, Rishi Sunak MP. In his response in March 2022, Mr Sunak said that the decision to use an Amendment of the Law motion was due to "a small modernisation in practice which ensures that each of the tax changes requiring legislation is clearly underpinned by its own resolution, and means that the Government is not seeking parliamentary authority for a broader Finance Bill than it plans to introduce." It should be noted that this modernisation was never discussed with the Procedure Committee but was introduced unilaterally by the then

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Government. As you yourself found in 2018, this “modernisation” is beneficial to the Treasury at the expense of Parliament.

In light of this, I would be grateful if you could **confirm that the Government will reinstate the use of an Amendment of the Law motion**, rather than an Income Tax (Charge) motion, following the Budget.

Taking this step would restore an important procedural practice, demonstrate the Government’s commitment to robust parliamentary scrutiny, and enable MPs to fulfil their constitutional responsibility to hold the Executive to account for the nation’s finances on behalf of their constituents.

I would be happy to discuss this further with you or your officials at any time.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Ruth Fox.
Director

Copied to for information:

Rt Hon Rachel Reeves MP, Chancellor of the Exchequer
Rt Hon Alan Campbell MP, Leader of the House of Commons
Cat Smith MP, Chair, House of Commons Procedure Committee
Dame Meg Hillier MP, Chair, House of Commons Treasury Committee
Rt Hon Mel Stride MP, Shadow Chancellor
Rebecca Harris MP, Shadow Chief Whip
Rt Hon Jesse Norman MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons
Daisy Cooper MP, Treasury Spokesperson
Wendy Chamberlain MP, Shadow Chief Whip
Bobby Dean MP, Shadow Leader of the House of Commons



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