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HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

RT HON NIGEL DODDS OBE MP
Member of Parliament for North Belfast

Our Ref: NAD/NG/13,613

27 November 2012

Mr Mervyn Storey MLA
Chair, Education Committee
c/o Room 207
Parliament Buildings
Stormont
BELFAST
BT4 3XX

Dear Mervyn

Please find enclosed a copy of a letter I've received from Ms Irene McCourt of 25 The Brackens, Newtownabbey regarding her concerns in relation to the Education Bill.

I would be grateful if you could consider the points she has raised and let me have your comments in due course to enable me to respond to her.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely



NIGEL DODDS OBE MP

Please quote our reference on all correspondence

I will treat as confidential all personal information you give me or my staff. I may need to pass on this information to others so they can help you. I undertake to handle the information you give me in line with the Data Protection Act 1998.

25 The Brackens
Newtownabbey
BT36 6SH

26th November 2012

Ref. The Education Bill

Dear Mr Dodds,

I am writing to you as a citizen of Northern Ireland and a concerned parent. I wish to express my strong opposition to this Bill in its present form.

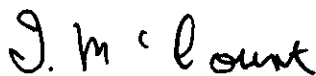
My main concern is that the draft legislation fails to reconcile the inherent contradiction between provisions stating that the proposed Education and Skills Authority would be the sole employer of staff while simultaneously providing for the existing functions of Boards of Governors to remain unaffected.

The inescapable conclusion is that, in the drive towards the centralisation of power and control in the hands of the Minister and the Dept of Education through the agency of ESA, the degree of autonomy currently enjoyed by Governors, particularly of voluntary grammar schools, will be severely diluted.

It is a matter of further concern that there will be no sectoral representation for voluntary schools on the ESA.

I assure you that these concerns are shared by many parents and trust that we may rely on your support by endeavouring to amend these discriminatory and anti-democratic proposals before they are given the force of law.

Yours faithfully



Irene McCourt