**Write to your MP**

Template letter

**Dear**

I am writing to you because, as my MP, I would like your support to get one part of the Trade Union Bill amended before it becomes law.

Many trade union members have their union subscriptions taken straight out of their wages, a method known as check-off or ‘DOCAS’ (deductions of contributions at source).

As it stands, the Trade Union Bill will make it illegal for this to happen in the British public sector.

As a trade union member, I believe that we should be able to pay our union subscriptions through our wages if we make the choice to. It is easy, efficient and very cheap to administer. It also creates a transparent relationship between my employer and my union which contributes to them working in partnership, and ultimately leads to a better service for the public.

On 19 April an amendment tabled in the House of Lords by the Conservative Peer Lord Balfe will be debated. This amendment will allow check-off arrangements to continue where trade unions can pay for the administrative costs – at a rate set independently by the Certification Officer. This supports the Government’s aim of eliminating any cost to the taxpayer of the check-off system – but also allows unions members to make their own individual choice to use a trusted, secure and constant system where their trade union pays the employer for that service.

A similar amendment was previously debated during the Bill’s Committee Stage in the House of Lords on 25 Feb 2016 and where Lord Cormack said “This clause is an unnecessary, meddlesome, bureaucratic abolition of choice.”

When the Bill was in the House of Commons, MPs from all political parties supported calls for the Government to reconsider this section of the Bill and introduce a system of charging for check-off services rather than banning them. An amendment similar to that now proposed by Lord Balfe was tabled by Conservative MP Jeremy Lefroy.

My union UNISON agrees that the taxpayer should not pay for any additional costs in processing check-off – which is why UNISON covers the cost whenever asked. UNISON is also supporting the changes to the Bill proposed by Lord Balfe, and by Jeremy Lefroy MP before him, which will require unions to pay the administrative cost if they use the service.

Should the House of Lords amend that section of the Bill as outlined above, will you support me and other public service workers by resisting any attempts to change the Bill back to its original wording?