
People want a more effective parliament

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Last weekend Power2010 brought together a sample of people from across the UK, selected by YouGov to be representative of the population as a whole, to discuss and debate ideas to clean up and reform our democracy. Under the guidance of deliberative expert Professor James Fishkin, small groups made use of balanced briefing materials and expert opinion to discuss a range of proposals for reform drawn from nearly 4,500 online submissions.

The results, published today, are striking. People wanted their rights protected better, they wanted more of a voice, but crucially they wanted a more effective parliament. Among the most popular reforms were those which would create a stronger more independent parliament, capable of checking government and representing the interests of the nation. A proposal to strengthen select committees received most support, followed by a proposal to give MPs more control over the parliamentary timetable.

The proposals of Tony Wright MP's reform committee, set up in response to the expenses crisis (Watchdog launches consultation on MPs' expenses, 8 January), focus on exactly this. They therefore provide an immediate opportunity to act on the collective wisdom of the public. Today, Harriet Harman will announce Commons business for the week ahead and she might wish to read the findings of our deliberative poll before making decisions on whether the Wright recommendations deserve parliamentary time. The full results of the poll can be found on our website (www.power2010.org.uk). The public now have the chance to vote for those reforms they feel would most enhance democracy.

Pam Giddy

Director, Power2010