



Sunlight Centre for Open Politics

Mr Brendan Keith
Clerk to the Committee for Privileges
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0PW

16 June, 2009

Sent by post and fax to 0207 219 6726

Dear Mr Keith,

Regarding Baron Rennard of Wavertree

We are writing to formally ask you to investigate Baron Rennard of Wavertree, focusing on the situation regarding his primary residence and second home. Lord Rennard has claimed over £41,000 in expenses for a home in Stockwell which is officially classified as his second residence or holiday home, yet it is just two miles from Westminster. This is despite owning a residence in Eastbourne, where neighbours claim to see him very rarely and have even described him as "the holiday man". Lord Rennard has been for many years the Chief Executive Officer of the Liberal Democrats and maintained an office with staff within the Liberal Democrat headquarters at 4 Cowley Street. Lord Rennard's job has been a full time five-days-a-week role. It would therefore appear to us that Lord Rennard is based full time in London and thus his home in Stockwell is his primary residence, not his second holiday home.

There is further circumstantial evidence that would support this claim;

- He is registered on the electoral roll to vote in Stockwell.
- He is a member of the Local Residents Association in Stockwell.
- He is a member of the local Vauxhall Liberal Democrats.

When his other expenses claims are examined in detail, evidence points to the Stockwell residence (which was bought in June 1998, over a year before he was appointed to the House of Lords) being Lord Rennard's primary home. From 2003 to 2007 Lord Rennard claimed no overnight subsistence and more importantly no travel costs. If, as he would have us believe, he was traveling backwards and forwards from his main residence, only spending the occasional night in his "second home" in Stockwell, then the question must be asked as to why has he not claimed any travel expenses from his main residence, despite attending over five hundred days in the House of Lords during this period?

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We have written to him three times and received no satisfactory answer. It would appear to us that there is a *prima facie* case for Lord Rennard to answer concerning these arrangements and that further investigation, with the full compliance of Lord Rennard, is needed before this can be cleared up.

There also appears to be some discrepancies in the amount Lord Rennard is claiming for attendance at the House of Lords, especially given his full time job at Liberal Democrat HQ. For example, between April 2007 - March 2008, Lord Rennard spoke seven times. He also attended 48 out of a possible 109 votes (44%). This was over a period of only thirty one different days, however within that period he claimed 129 days of attendance and overnight allowances for all of them. He could argue that he was listening to the debates and did not speak or vote at them, but given that he has a full time job just around the corner from the House of Lords, we believe this claim to be questionable.

Thank you for your time and cooperation in advance and we would appreciate an acknowledgement of this letter by email or telephone.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Galley', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Christopher Galley
Centre for Open Politics
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