

Dear friend,

I am sometimes asked (especially by aspiring lawyers!) why I gave up being a lawyer to become an MP. This week has been one of those weeks that I remind myself that I made a great choice in making the change.

Equal rights for everyone

When I was lawyer I often acted for clients who had suffered discrimination in some way; due to their race, or because they were women, or because they had a disability or due to their age.

For some clients I was able to use the existing legislation to help them get a fair deal in the courts. However for others there was nothing that could be done. There are many loopholes in our laws and these were often exploited by employers in the both the public and private sector. I remember campaigning about this and lobbying Ministers and Shadow Ministers (from all three main parties) about the need to update our laws to reflect the needs of our changing society.

By becoming an MP and member of the Government I have been given the opportunity to help pass legislation that can benefit millions of fellow citizens.

So I am really pleased that this week we published details of a new Equality Bill. The Bill will deliver much needed simplification and harmonisation of discrimination law and remove loopholes in the existing legislation. This builds on the progress made over the last few years, which includes outlawing discrimination in the workplace on the basis of religious beliefs or sexual orientation.

The Bill will bring together nine major pieces of legislation and around 100 other laws into a single Act.

This may not make us politicians popular with lawyers (who should now be needed less) and some employers (who will need to close the gender pay gap) but it will improve our society with greater equality.

The main beneficiaries of the Bill will be people like my former clients: Women who are not paid as highly as men doing similar work, disabled people who are written off as potential employees and other minorities who are excluded from participating fully in social and economic life.

I have been involved in this fight to remove the hierarchy of rights that exist in the UK for over a decade (as a lawyer and MP). It is a great feeling to be involved in taking this massive step towards wiping out inequality in the UK for good.

Going Back to School

On Tuesday, I visited my old school, Ernest Bevin, for a production and exhibition in celebration of Refugee week. I bumped into one of my old teachers Mr Day (who is in fact Jeremy Day but habit means I can't call him by his first name, despite having left the school more than 20 years ago!). It was thanks to Mr Day and other teachers like him that I was able to go to university.

During the presentation, refugee students shared stories of some of the war torn countries they or their families had fled. They also talked about the hospitality and kindness shown to them by teachers, pupils and the wider community. Their talent made all of us in the audience feel both humble and proud. However, it is a sad fact that there are some amongst us who less kind and hospitable.

Although the new legislation may not change the way these people think about refugees, it will mean that they will have to change the way they treat refugees. By changing the way people treat others, we take the first steps towards changing the way people *think* about others.

Until next week.

Best wishes,

Sadiq

To read more about my work in our community and in Westminster, read my diary by clicking [HERE](#)

CONTACTING ME

I hold four advice surgeries every month around the constituency. For more information about making an appointment and how to contact me click [HERE](#).

Whether it's a local issue or government policy, I'm here to help (whatever your politics). Click [HERE](#) for details of how to contact or meet me.

For more details on my work for Tooting constituency residents, please see my website: www.sadiqkhan.org.uk.

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