

CITIZENS' INITIATIVE AND REFERENDUM I&R  
campaign for direct democracy in Britain



**Election June 2017  
we can**

**TAKE BACK CONTROL**

**BY CLAIMING OUR ACTIVE POLITICAL RIGHTS**

*Approach parliamentary candidates and ask them to support the introduction of citizen launched referendum. For this, Parliament must pass a new Democracy and Political Rights Act.*

*Spread the word and kick off debates about the need for more and better participation in politics: We need the People's Law Proposal (Citizens' Initiative) and the Electors' Veto referendum to block unwanted government law or policy.*

The campaign for "brexit", to leave the European Union, urged citizens of the UK and Northern Ireland to support the idea of recovering our "sovereignty" from the European Union and its unelected Commission. The "Leavers" said, let us "take back control". Having left the EU, so the brexiteers, "WE" shall "again" be able to make our own laws and run our country as we wish. But you may say, hang on, just WHO will run the country in our newly independent UK & NI?

In a democracy, according to international treaties which Parliament has ratified (confirmed) on our behalf, we citizens must be able to take part in, in other words to CONTROL, our government. This means that we have, or should have, political rights which enable us to take part in public affairs, local and central. These rights include 1) Being able to co-decide on public issues by means of a ballot (referendum), 2) Being able to stand for election to public office such as member of parliament, 3) Being able to vote in elections of politicians.

Our prime minister Theresa May has said that the people have taken a highly important decision – to quit the European Union – by voting "Leave" in a national referendum. She claims that we have given her "a mandate" (ordered her) to complete "brexit". Does she then accept that ultimate power in the state belongs to the people? We agree that that is how things should be. So, why is it that we can have so very little influence on what our MPs ("they work for us") and government do in our names?

As things stand, our political rights are so WEAK that we clearly do NOT HAVE CONTROL of our own affairs and of our political representatives (MPs), Parliament and government. Having a referendum from time to time does not help much. Only Parliament, which has always followed the will of government on this, can set the question and decree that a ballot shall be held. The result, the will of the people, is regarded as only advisory, not legally binding on Parliament and government.

For the vast majority of people our political rights are LIMITED to casting a vote once every five years for a politician and political party.

In the period between general elections we CANNOT INTERVENE with a proposal, for instance if our MPs "forget" a manifesto promise or if events change political circumstances. If government announces bad policy (proposals) or threatens law which is clearly against the interests of the majority, then we have NO WAY to VETO (block) their plan. We are told by the authorities that we can wait for the next general election and "throw the blighters out". But by then, usually years ahead, damage which can be irreversible may have been done, damage to the economy, trade, environment, social systems and health, education and so on.

What can be done to improve all of this? The people, the electorate, voters must be enabled to select, debate and decide by ballot on public issues, in addition to electing politicians who then make law and govern for us. We must add the methods of direct democracy to the existing indirect "representative" rule by party bosses, supposedly "checked and balanced" by Parliament.

The new Democracy and Political Rights Bill to be put before Parliament should contain:

### **Citizens' Initiative or Law Proposal**

With the "initiative" a citizen or group has the right to put forward a proposal to introduce, change or veto law. In order that a proposal will be put to the electorate (in a "referendum" or "ballot") an agreed number of endorsements ("signatures") must be collected and validated.

### **Legally binding referendum launched by voters**

If the required number of endorsements is obtained as above, there are two ways to proceed:

1. The proposal is put to the electorate in a referendum.
2. The proposal is first presented to parliament or local council, which must debate it. Parliament or council may adopt the proposal and pass it as law. Proposals which are rejected must be put to the electorate in a referendum. If a majority of the electorate votes for the proposal then it becomes law.

### **Some principles and features of good democracy**

The right to take part in running public affairs is a universal human right.

This right must be readily operable in politics and not subject to hindrances beyond reasonable regulation.

Democracy must include rule-by-the-people and may not be limited to indirect "representative" rule by politicians.

The people can decide directly on public issues in addition to electing and removing politicians.

Formal proposals concerning public policy may come from the people and not only from an "authority" such as a parliament, government, civil service or a political party.

Proposals supported by a large number of the people must be put to the whole electorate for decision by ballot.

## **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

[Register](https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/) as a voter early or check that you are still on the electoral roll  
<https://www.yourvotematters.co.uk/>

[Approach candidates and sitting MPs](http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html#contact) (see guide at <http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html#contact>) and ask them to support the introduction of more direct democracy as described above. Invite them to sign our [STATEMENT ON DEMOCRACY](http://www.iniref.org/carta.htm) <http://www.iniref.org/carta.htm>

Suggest that they publicise this [STATEMENT ON DEMOCRACY](http://www.iniref.org/carta.htm) <http://www.iniref.org/carta.htm> and place a signed copy on their own web site ;-)

***ELECTION CAMPAIGN FOR DEMOCRACY AND POLITICAL RIGHTS strategy pages***

[FRAME ONE Setting the scene](http://www.iniref.org/tactic.html) <http://www.iniref.org/tactic.html>

[FRAME TWO The election-campaign plan-of-action](http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html) <http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html>

[MPs and CANDIDATES HOW TO CONTACT](http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html#contact) <http://www.iniref.org/tactic2.html#contact>

***Feedback:*** Please let the volunteers at ***I&R ~ GB Campaign for Direct Democracy*** know about your experience and the reactions of the politicians: E-mail [info@iniref.org](mailto:info@iniref.org) Twitter @yourballot [facebook](#) <https://www.facebook.com/fred.directdemocracy>

Find out more about direct democracy via [www.iniref.org](http://www.iniref.org)

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