



Parliamentary Monitor – October 2022

Introduction

Parliament returned after conference recess on the 10th October to a great degree of speculation about the future of the Truss Government's economic agenda and the position of Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng. After being recalled from an international finance ministerial meeting in New York, Kwarteng was sacked as Chancellor on the 14th of October and replaced by Jeremy Hunt, who swiftly reversed almost all of the Government's fiscal statement (or mini-budget). Following several more days of political instability, including the resignation of Home Secretary Suella Braverman, the Prime Minister announced her resignation as Conservative Party leader on 20th October. In the ensuing leadership election former Prime Minister Boris Johnson attempted to rally enough support from MPs to stand, though only Rishi Sunak and Penny Mordaunt announced their candidacy. Penny Mordaunt had not reached the required threshold of 100 MPs to nominate her before the 2pm deadline on the 24th, so Rishi Sunak won the election. He took office as Prime Minister on the 25th October.

Education

Schools Bill – The changing of Government ministers over the past few months has left the future of some items of legislation in doubt, including the Schools Bill. The Partnerships & Public Affairs team has reiterated the support of the Catholic Education Service for the aspects of the Schools Bill which relate to Catholic schools and will continue to brief Parliamentarians in favour of it.

Meeting with Baroness Barran – Two meetings have been held with Baroness Barran, Minister for the School and College System, over the course of this month. The first meeting was held on 19 October, where the Baroness provided an update on the Schools Bill and its next steps. These next steps were then delayed by the resignation of Liz Truss from the role of Prime Minister. A week later on 27 October, Baroness Barran met with Bishop Marcus Stock and Bishop Paul Butler, the Anglican Bishop of Durham. This meeting provided the opportunity to discuss the Schools Bill, the need for safeguards relating to academisation in legislation, and the impact of the 50% cap on Catholic schools.

Welsh Schools Rebuilding Programme – The CES has continued to maintain regular contact with the Welsh education team relating to supporting Catholic schools in need of funds to rebuild or refurbish.

Meeting with Scottish Labour Shadow Secretary for Education – On 31 October, the Partnerships & Public Affairs Director and Partnerships & Public Affairs Officer met the Shadow Secretary for Education for the Scottish Labour Party, Michael Marra MSP, who requested a meeting to discuss education issues in England and Wales for a comparative perspective. The team raised several national education policy concerns with him, with which he expressed broad agreement.



Engagement with the Children's Commissioner – A letter of gratitude to the Children's Commissioner, Rachel de Souza, for the first part of her independent review into families, was sent on behalf of the Director of Partnerships & Public Affairs. A meeting was welcomed and arranged between the Director and Commissioner, which will also be attended by the CES Director, to raise the importance of pro-family public policy and the Catholic community's ongoing work.