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Statement on Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill

I know many constituents have concerns regarding the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill and I thank all those who have contacted me over the past few months, engaged with my survey and wrote to me with personal stories.

As I publicly stated in March, I shared those concerns and have been engaging with ministers and officials behind closed doors and publicly, including signing amendments and speaking in public on the concerns.

I am pleased that the Government listened to myself and colleagues and made important concessions including:

- A £1billion package over the next three years to support people with long-term illnesses or disabilities into work who wish to work.
- Constituents who currently receive PIP or the health element of Universal Credit will not see any reduction to their payments.
- Most importantly, the Timms review, which will look at the PIP assessment process, will take place in co-production with disabled people, representative groups and MPs.

I previously spoke about how I could not support the bill due to my concerns. The UK Government has addressed many of those concerns and have now made cast iron assurances that there will be no cut-off of current levels of PIP before the Timms Review is implemented and that reference to the 4-point criteria will be removed from the bill (clause 5).

This is something that I and other colleagues have been lobbying the government for, and I thank them for listening to our concerns and taking action to amend the bill.

I will work with the government to deliver for Wrexham, helping people into work, fixing health issues, investing in good, well-paid jobs through our Investment Zone here in Wrexham, working on reliable transport links through North Wales and beyond to allow access to work that is not always available now.

Over the next few months, I will continue to work with constituents, disability organisations and the government to ensure that we shape the fair system that disabled people deserve.

I voted for the bill last night, which is something that I wrestled with throughout the day. There will be further votes on this subject next week, and I am being clear that if the assurances that were made are not delivered on, I may withdraw the support given previously.

Labour values do not mean trapping people into the welfare system without a way out, it means supporting people into work whilst most importantly, having a secure safety net for the most vulnerable and allowing them to live with dignity.

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