

JESS ASATO MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP  
Secretary of State for Education  
Sanctuary Buildings  
Great Smith Street  
London, SW1P 3BT

26 February 2025

Dear Bridget,

We hope this letter finds you well.

We are writing to you today following the conclusion of the Committee Stage for the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill to request a meeting with you to discuss the defence of reasonable punishment and how we might work together to end physical punishment of children in England.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill is a welcome step forward for the protection and safeguarding of children. A Bill that intends to put children first and break down barriers to opportunity is one that we are proud to get behind. However, we believe there is one change which would truly improve the wellbeing of many children in England.

Amendment NC10, tabled by Jess, signed by 30 MPs across the House, and spoken to by Ellie during committee stage on 6 February, sought to close a legal loophole that continues to damage the wellbeing of children. Closing that would complement this Government's mission to break down barriers to opportunity and raise the healthiest generation of children ever.

As you know, removing the reasonable punishment defence would give children in England not only the same rights as children in Scotland and Wales but also as adults currently receive. How can it be right that an adult in England has greater rights to protection than a more vulnerable child?

We agree that policy-making should be evidence-led and, when it comes to this issue, the evidence is clear. International evidence shows that with legislative change to prevent physical punishment of children, a decrease in use of physical punishment follows over time. We refer to evidence submitted to the Bill committee from a range of organisations including NSPCC, Barnardo's, the Children's Commissioner, and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health.

JESS ASATO MP

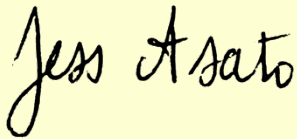
*Member of Parliament for Lowestoft*  
[jess.asato.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jess.asato.mp@parliament.uk)

We want to work with you to ensure children growing up in England get the best start in life. Ending the defence of reasonable punishment through the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill would be a fantastic opportunity for the Government to achieve this aim.

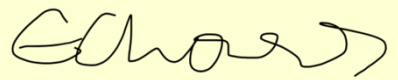
We welcome the Government's constructive tone on this issue and the willingness of your Department to engage meaningfully on this topic. It is in that spirit that we write to you today to request a meeting between you and the parliamentarians who have supported this amendment ahead of further debate at Report Stage, in order to further explain the evidence behind this important change and the levels of public support for it.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,



**Jess Asato MP**  
Member of Parliament for Lowestoft



**Ellie Chowns MP**  
Member of Parliament for North Herefordshire