



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Sir Thomas Legg  
Chair, The ACA Review  
Department of Resources  
House of Commons  
London, SW1A 0AA

14<sup>th</sup> October 2009

*Dear Sir Thomas*

As soon as I could after The Daily Telegraph obtained the details of MPs' expenses, I published mine on my website for my constituents to see. Only one person (not a constituent) raised an issue over them with me.

My expenses were further examined by The Daily Telegraph and were given a clean bill of health. That record has now effectively been overturned by your retrospective and arbitrary rewriting of the rules which presents the same individual as someone who has had his hand in the public till.

Over the first four years covered by your Review, I claimed £44,338 (51 per cent of the total sum allowable). My annual claim fell from £11,250 in the first year to £9,573 in the fourth year and will again fall to £7,303, when the most recent allowance figures are published.

So far so good. However, you assert that I have claimed just under £1,000 per year too much for the maintenance of my second home.

You have further (and inaccurately) concluded that a total of £1,800 for petty cash claims and household costs were claimed during the five years **after** I was informed that I was not entitled to make such claims. This figure is not only incorrect, but the payments were agreed **before** I was informed of any change to the rules.

It is important to clarify that your reference to "Correspondence from the Fees Office" (of which the crucial parts I did not see until the Fees Office made the files public) is not, as you suggest, related to the payments of



these household costs (which were accepted) but, rather, to two later and different claims. Once I was informed by the Fees Office of the change to the rules, I immediately met Fees Office staff who accepted the validity of these claims.

I note that three bills were filed under the wrong heading and ought to have been included under the IEP allowance and not the ACA allowance. However, that error does not, in any way, affect the validity of these claims.

I accept that three bills totalling £116.94 were wrongly submitted a second time and therefore paid twice. I also accept that this second set of claims should neither have been made nor paid. This error constitutes the sole claim that I made over this five year period which I should not have made.

My core concern remains the damage you inflict through simply deciding independently to change the rules and apply them retrospectively.

Thirty years of behaving with probity would now be undermined if I were simply to accept your recommendation to "repay". To do so would be to admit guilt. With the exception of the error in claiming a total of £116.94 twice, I do not accept that conclusion.

You state in your letter that you are "open to representations about...accuracy or fairness". I welcome that commitment as your letter is neither accurate nor fair and I therefore urge you to set aside your retrospective imposition of an arbitrary limit.

With best wishes,