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Government amends law change bill

The government is to back down over a bill which would have given ministers the power to alter legislation without the approval of Parliament.

The amendments are in response to criticism by MPs from all parties and from civil liberties groups.

They claimed the regulatory reform bill would enable ministers to re-write a range of laws.

Cabinet Office Minister Jim Murphy said the changes meant the law could only be used to cut unnecessary red tape.

The regulatory reform bill gives ministers a fast-track procedure to repeal, amend or replace laws without the need to go through lengthy Parliamentary procedures.

Critics had demanded changes as the bill could have allowed governments to scrap fundamental rights such as trial by jury or the Magna Carta.



The bill was welcomed by business, keen to cut out red tape

“ Let the government get on with the crucial task of cutting unnecessary red tape ”

Jim Murphy
Cabinet Office minister

The public administration committee, a powerful panel of MPs, had said the powers were "entirely disproportionate" and demanded "real restrictions" to be included.

Mr Murphy, tabling the changes, said: "We have tabled amendments that put beyond doubt that this bill will deliver our better regulation agenda and nothing else.

"The time has come for those who claim they want to tackle bureaucracy to show they mean what they say, and let the government get on with the crucial task of cutting unnecessary red tape."

'Out-of-date bureaucracy'

He said the bill would deliver billions of pounds of savings for the economy "through reducing the regulatory burden imposed on businesses, and ease the burden imposed by redundant and out-of-date bureaucracy on nurses, doctors, police and charity workers".


The bill was welcomed by the CBI, whose deputy director said it would bring "crucial benefits" for UK businesses.

"The bill is now focused explicitly on delivering better regulation, and the time has come to get on with the task of removing barriers to productivity and delivering the reductions to unnecessary red tape that business is crying out for," said John Cridland.

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