Baroness Thornton (Labour)

My Lords, I rise to intervene on this Motion today with a very heavy heart and empty-handed, because the Government have refused to release the risk register on the implementation of the Health and Social Care Bill, as instructed in the judgment of the Information Commissioner last Friday. I am grateful to the Minister for his letters to me and other noble Lords explaining the Government’s position on this matter. Thorough explanations are helpful but they do not make this a right or just position for the Government to take. The Government inform us that they need 28 days to consider this issue. I would just make the point that the Department of Health has had a whole year to think about this issue.

Noble Lords may recall that I drew this important matter to the attention of the House on Monday and specifically asked the Minister to assist the House in its deliberations by making the risk register available. I am most grateful that the noble Baroness, Lady Williams, supported my appeal. Since Monday, it has become clear that the well respected Conservative MP, Dr Sarah Wollaston, made the same plea to her own Secretary of State in a letter to the Evening Standard.

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