

Over 60% Brits think bishops have no place in parliament

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Most Brits think bishops should not have automatic seats in parliament, new figures confirm.

A survey of 1,631 UK adults in April [found](#) 62% disagreed with the statement: "Do you think that Bishops should still have a place in Parliament in a modern democracy?"

The survey by Techne UK found only 19% agreed with the statement, while the remaining 19% answered "Don't know".

Younger people were even more likely to oppose bishops in the House of Lords, with 70% of 18-34 year olds and 71% of 35-44 year olds responding that bishops should have no place in parliament.

The results are consistent with previous surveys on the subject. In a YouGov survey last year, [over 50%](#) said the Lords should cease to reserve places for C of E bishops.

Campaign to scrap the bishops' bench

Twenty-six places in the Lords are reserved for C of E bishops and archbishops as of right. The National Secular Society [argues for the end of the 'bishops' bench'](#) as part of its campaigning to separate church and state.

The bishops in parliament, known as 'Lords Spiritual', are able to debate and vote on all legislation. They regularly oppose policies which they believe contravene Anglican doctrine, including reforming the law on [assisted dying](#) and [easier access to abortion medication](#).

The UK is unique among Western democracies in giving representatives of religious groups automatic seats in its legislature.

In 2020 the NSS helped to draft [a bill to end C of E bishops' automatic right](#) to sit in the Lords.

NSS head of policy and research Megan Manson said: "Polling consistently shows the bishops' bench is very unpopular with the public, who rightly want to see a more democratic House of Lords with no special privileges granted to religious leaders.

"This latest poll confirms it is high time we abolished this anachronism.

"Scrapping the bishops' bench is right in principle. Granting seats in our upper house to clerics on the basis of their religious membership is unfair, undemocratic and unequal.

"It's also a symptom of the underlying issue: the lack of church-state separation in our constitution. Disestablishing the Church of England is the only way to guarantee true equality for all UK citizens, whatever their religion or belief."

With special thanks to [Clive D. Field's blog](#) for the information.

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