



## Recess questions and September sittings

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The subjects of recess questions and September sittings were linked when Jack Straw announced that Members would have the opportunity to table questions on three days in September 2006. After the summer recess he announced that the House would have the opportunity to decide whether it wanted to sit in September in the future, saying that “I am in no doubt that, if we keep to the current recess arrangements, September questions are an important element”.

This note reviews the background to the House sitting in September 2003, September 2004 and September 2010; and the introduction of the tabling of questions for answer during the summer recess.

The House did not sit in September 2005; and when it became apparent that it would not sit in September 2006, a procedure for tabling and receiving answers to written questions in September was introduced. In March 2007 a new Standing Order to make the procedure permanent was adopted.

However, there continued to be requests for the House to sit in September, and in 2009, the Select Committee on the Reform of the House of Commons recommended that, in the new Parliament, the House should be given the opportunity to decide whether to sit in September 2010.

On 15 June 2010, the House agreed that the Government should propose a September sitting. Consequently, the House sat from Monday 6-Thursday 9 and Monday 13-Thursday 16 September 2010.

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## 1 Introduction

In September 2003 and September 2004, the House sat for a two week period. In other years, the House would have been in recess. The September sittings were not repeated in either 2005 or 2006. Following the Government's announcement in November 2005 that the House would not sit in September 2006,<sup>1</sup> a number of Members frequently called for the re-introduction of September sittings. Soon after his appointment as Leader of the House, Jack Straw, faced questions on his plans for September sittings. On 9 May 2006, he said that it was too late to make changes for 2006 as maintenance and holiday plans would already have been made.<sup>2</sup> However, on 20 July 2006, the Leader of the House announced that, for the first time, he proposed to allow the tabling of questions during the recess.<sup>3</sup>

In June 2010, the House decided to sit in September 2010.<sup>4</sup>

## 2 September sittings

### 2.1 Background

In September 2002, the Modernisation Committee published its report, *Modernisation of the House of Commons: A Reform Programme*, which led to the introduction of September sittings. The report was based on an earlier memorandum from Robin Cook, which contained proposals for a programme of work for the Modernisation Committee. In his memorandum, Mr Cook made the following comments on September sittings:

43. There is considerable dissatisfaction with the present long recess. Every year the press is critical of the prolonged period without a parliamentary sitting. In a number of years, it has been necessary in any event to recall Parliament to debate crises that have arisen since the House adjourned. Nor do the present dates match the school holidays of Members' children, particularly in the case of Members from Scotland, where schools return in the second week of August.

44. It is possible to meet public concern over the protracted period in which Parliament does not sit and the wish of Members for a recess that better matches the school holidays. The House could rise in early to mid-July and then break for a summer recess. The House could return in early September and rise in late September for a three-week Conference Recess. This would neither increase nor reduce the total period in which the House was in recess, but could prove a more acceptable pattern to the Press and to Members.<sup>5</sup>

At the end of its inquiry, the Modernisation Committee made the following comments on the September sitting and recommended that the House should sit in September:

#### A MORE PREDICTABLE COMMONS CALENDAR

70. It is strength of the British House of Commons that its Members represent clearly defined local constituencies. It is essential to the health of parliamentary democracy that Members of Parliament should have adequate opportunity to be among the constituents whom they represent. It is only that first hand contact with the electors that enables MPs to speak with authority in the Commons, to seek redress for grievances

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<sup>1</sup> HC Deb 10 November 2005 c470

<sup>2</sup> HC Deb 9 May 2006 c167

<sup>3</sup> HC Deb 20 July 2006 cc455-456

<sup>4</sup> HC Deb 15 June 2010 c846

<sup>5</sup> Modernisation Committee, *Modernisation of the House of Commons: A Reform Programme for Consultation*, 12 December 2001, HC 440 2001-02, paras 43-44

of individual constituents and to hold Ministers to account for the impact of their policies and legislation.

71. We reject the view implicit in some media comment that MPs are at work when Parliament is sitting but not at work when Parliament is in recess. Most MPs put as long hours into a working day in the constituency as they do during a parliamentary day and that work among their constituents is just as valuable to the democratic process. It is particularly important to Members with constituencies beyond commuting distance of Westminster that there should be adequate opportunity for them to put in working weeks in a constituency and this is only possible during the parliamentary recess.

72. The British House of Commons spends far less time in recess than most other democratic parliaments. The House of Commons meets for more days than any of the parliaments of the larger Commonwealth countries and indeed for twice as many days as all of them except Canada. The typical pattern among European parliaments is for the legislature to sit around 100 days in the year, compared with 150 days for the UK Parliament. It is not immediately apparent that the quality of British legislation is superior as a result of our unusually large number of sitting days.

73. If we are to address the growing gap between the electorate and politicians, which we have discussed earlier, there is a solid case for arguing that more time should be provided within the Commons calendar for MPs to be among their constituents. We recognise the heavy pressures of parliamentary business and our recommendations do not substantially alter the balance between parliamentary weeks and constituency weeks. We do believe though that it is possible to make more predictable arrangements for the Commons calendar which would permit MPs to make more effective use of the time when they are not at Westminster.

74. We recognise that the earlier MPs know the dates of recess, the more productive use they can make of their time in the constituency. It would also assist lobby groups and NGOs in planning parliamentary events to know with confidence well in advance when Parliament will be sitting. We welcome the recent practice of giving longer notice of forthcoming recess dates but believe it should be possible to go further. We recommend that the Commons calendar should be announced a year in advance in order that MPs can sensibly plan to make maximum use of time in their constituencies. This would of course not prevent the unscheduled recall of Parliament when a matter of national concern arises during a recess.

75. By convention Parliament has taken short recesses at the major holidays of Christmas and New Year, Easter and Whitsun. These are not the best time for constituency work as so many businesses, local authorities and schools are also on holiday. We recommend that an additional week for constituency work should be included in the first half of each year by being added to either the Easter or the Whit recess.

76. It is a curiosity of the Commons calendar that a majority of the non-sitting weeks come together in one unbroken run from the end of July to the middle of October. This results in an extended period in which there is no parliamentary scrutiny and no opportunity for MPs to debate the issues of the moment. It is a source of complaint by Members who cannot table parliamentary questions for almost three months. It is a source of criticism by the media who often assert, albeit unjustly, that MPs are on holiday throughout that time.

77. We believe that Parliament could be more effective if it was not absent for such a long continuous period. We recommend that the Commons should rise in mid-July for

the summer recess and return in early September. The House would then rise in September for a conference recess during the period of the party conference season. This arrangement would end the prolonged period in which there can be no parliamentary debate or parliamentary questions. It would enable the media to report on Parliament throughout September, rather than having to report the absence of Parliament. It would have the added bonus of more fairly aligning the summer recess with the school holidays.<sup>6</sup>

The House debated the Modernisation Committee's report on 29 October 2002, and following divisions on two amendments (both negatived) the House agreed the following motion by 411 votes to 47.<sup>7</sup> It included specific provision for sitting in September:

That this House approves the Second Report from the Select Committee on Modernisation of the House of Commons, and endorses its proposals, in particular for more effective law making by more routine publication of bills in draft for pre-legislative scrutiny, for consultation with Opposition parties on the broad shape of the legislative year and more flexibility in programming, for an annual House of Commons calendar which would allow honourable Members to plan work in their constituencies more effectively and provide sittings in September balanced by an earlier recess in July, for more effective use of the Chamber including more regular use of time limits on speeches, and a Parliament that is more accessible to the public that it serves.

In the debate, Robin Cook argued for September sittings in the following way:

Better scrutiny is also why I believe that the Commons should be prepared to return as a matter of routine for September sittings. It is not healthy for the elected representatives of the British people to be absent for three months at a stretch. Too much happens while we are away, and too many decisions necessarily have to be taken by Government in our absence, for which there is no opportunity for Ministers to give an account to the Commons.

I was struck at the last two business questions by the number of hon. Members who demanded a statement on events that took place during the recess. If we had routine September sittings, there would have been statements on many of those issues. I am confident, for instance, that the House would have heard, and would have welcomed, a major statement on the outcome of the important Johannesburg summit on sustainable development. Recent experience is that we have to make emergency arrangements to come back in September anyway. If every Member who demanded the recall of Parliament some time this summer votes for September sittings, I am confident of a comfortable majority.

I stress that this is not a proposition covertly to cheat Members out of the total length of their summer recess. The deal is that the House will rise two weeks earlier in July, which will be for the convenience of those Members with children at schools that go back in August. In return, Members will be expected to come back for two weeks in September. I understand the concerns of those Members with young children who wish to be at home when the children go back to school in the first week of September. In the event of the House agreeing to September sittings, I propose that we return in the second week of September.

**Mr. Forth:** Will the Leader of the House give way?

**Mr. Cook:** Of course. I could not resist giving way to the right hon. Gentleman.

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<sup>6</sup> Modernisation Committee, *Modernisation of the House of Commons: A Reform Programme*, 5 September 2002, HC 1168-I 2001-02

**Mr. Forth:** I am sure that the right hon. Gentleman has not committed an inadvertent slip of the tongue, because he never does. We were led to believe that the House would sit for three weeks in September, which we fully and enthusiastically support. Has that mysteriously slipped back to two weeks in September, and if so, why?

**Mr. Cook:** There is no sudden change. On the contrary, if the right hon. Gentleman looks at the report he will see that we discussed the possibility of two or three weeks. I have announced that we will return for two weeks in the coming year. We are open to consultation and have made it clear in the report that we will consult. If the right hon. Gentleman wishes to press us to meet in the first week of September, we will listen to those representations, but I think he will find them at variance with the wishes of many hon. Members, especially those with young children who attend schools that start in that week. It is only reasonable that we take account of the pressures on them.<sup>8</sup>

Following that decision the House sat in September 2003 and September 2004:  
2003: Monday 8 – Thursday 11, and Monday 15 – Thursday 18; and  
2004: Tuesday 7 – Thursday 9, and Monday 13 – Thursday 16.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2 No September sittings in 2005 and 2006

In both 2005 and 2006, there were requests for the House to sit in September. There was no sitting in September 2005 because the permanent security screen was being erected in the Chamber.<sup>10</sup>

In 2006, Peter Bone requested that the Leader of the House “bring forward plans for the House to sit in September”. Jack Straw replied:

**The Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Jack Straw):** As the provisional calendar for the remainder of this Session was announced in November last, the authorities have now made their maintenance plans, and right hon. and hon. Members and staff have made their vacation arrangements accordingly. It would therefore not be feasible to reinstate the September sitting for this year, although I hasten to point out that the House has to make its decision on that and has yet to do so. But I am open to representations from both sides of the House in respect of future years.<sup>11</sup>

## 2.3 An end to September sittings?

On 12 October 2006, during Business Questions, Jack Straw announced that he would give the House an opportunity to decide whether to sit in September in the future.<sup>12</sup>

The House debated the future of September sittings on 1 November 2006. Jack Straw proposed:

That this House welcomes the introduction of a procedure for the tabling and answering of written questions and the making of written ministerial statements during the summer adjournment, as adopted by the House on 24th July for the current session; accordingly reconsiders the part of its resolution of 29th October 2002 endorsing the proposal for September sittings; and is of the opinion that the House

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<sup>7</sup> HC Deb 29 October 2002 c801

<sup>8</sup> HC Deb 29 October 2002 cc692-693

<sup>9</sup> Details of the business taken at those sittings was outlined in response to a parliamentary question before the debate on 1 November 2006: HC Deb 30 October 2006 c24W

<sup>10</sup> HC Deb 19 May 2005 c272

<sup>11</sup> HC Deb 9 May 2006 c167

<sup>12</sup> HC Deb 12 October 2006 c449

should not sit during September (except pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order No. 13 (Earlier meeting of the House in certain circumstances)).<sup>13</sup>

The House debated the motion and an amendment from David Winnick that would have committed the House to “hold regular sittings for a period in September”. The amendment was defeated by 354 votes to 122,<sup>14</sup> and Jack Straw's proposal was then agreed to without a division.<sup>15</sup>

During the debate, Jack Straw explained the reasons to end September sittings. He noted that in September 2006, Members were able to table questions for answer during the recess and that ministers were able to issue written ministerial statements. He argued that making these arrangements permanent enabled him to propose that September sittings were no longer necessary:

The particular arrangements for September questions and statements in 2006 applied, by resolution, for this year only, but we are bringing forward proposals for a more permanent system. On the basis that the House will approve such a system, I am happy to propose the motion today.<sup>16</sup>

David Winnick immediately countered:

... the overriding responsibility of a Member of Parliament is to hold the Government to account in the Chamber? Even if one can submit written questions, not sitting for about 11 weeks is unacceptable. That is why I hope that a number of hon. Members will support my amendment.<sup>17</sup>

He expanded on these comments when he moved his amendment.<sup>18</sup>

## 2.4 The re-introduction of September sittings

Although Members made use of the opportunity to table questions in the longer summer recesses in 2006 to 2009, there continued to be calls for the House to sit in September. Questions were asked and David Winnick initiated an Adjournment Debate.

After the summer recess of 2009, Chris Mullin asked:

**Mr. Chris Mullin (Sunderland, South) (Lab):** Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that if we care about the low esteem in which our profession is held, one easy win would be to put an end to the 82-day annual recess and sit in September, as we once agreed to do? Will she arrange an early debate on the subject so that we can get the excuses out of the way as early as possible?<sup>19</sup>

In October 2007, after speculation about a general election had ended, David Kidney observed that:

Only in Parliament, during September, was there no debate about an early election. Only in Parliament was there no debate about an international credit crunch, a run on a bank in Britain, foot and mouth disease for the second time, the bluetongue virus and

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<sup>13</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 c414

<sup>14</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 c415

<sup>15</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 c418

<sup>16</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 c317

<sup>17</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 c318

<sup>18</sup> HC Deb 1 November 2006 cc330-333

<sup>19</sup> HC Deb 22 October 2009 c1063. Chris Mullin also raised the issue after the summer recess in 2008 [HC Deb 9 October 2008 c414]

the speculation about when we should call the election. Does my right hon. and learned Friend agree that written answers are not a suitable alternative to substantive debate about the big issues of the day, and that Parliament should sit in September?<sup>20</sup>

In his Adjournment Debate, David Winnick acknowledged that Members could table questions and that select committees could meet during the recess. However, he continued that “The fact that written questions can be tabled on certain dates is welcome. It is one advance on what occurred previously, but it is not a substitute for parliamentary activities”.<sup>21</sup>

Questions about sitting in September arose in more general calls to reform the annual pattern of sittings of the House. In October 2007, Simon Hughes suggested “a wide-ranging debate on the diary of the parliamentary year”. He proposed that:

We could, for example, have a regular start to the Session every year in October; we could have a small carry-over at the beginning of September finishing before the party conferences, and then make a clean start afterwards. That would give us a much more orderly annual programme.<sup>22</sup>

In response to one request to sit in September, Harriet Harman, whilst Leader of the House of Commons, considered some of the implications of a shorter summer recess, saying:

... My hon. Friend talks about changing the dates to shorten the summer recess, but I think that it is very important that any changes we make in the House do nothing to undermine the constituency link—[Hon. Members: “Hear, hear!”] I am talking about the rootedness of Members of Parliament in their own constituencies. We need to scotch the idea—I am not saying that my hon. Friend was suggesting this; I know that he was not—that when we are not in the House, working in Committees or in the Chamber, we are all on holiday. At those times there is an opportunity—I would say an obligation—for Members to be in their constituencies working with their constituents. If we had shorter summer recesses, we would have more time in the House and less time in our constituencies. One of the things that we need to do is to make this clearer across the piece, so that our constituents can see the work that we do in our constituencies, as well as the work that we do in the House.<sup>23</sup>

In 2009, the Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons (the Wright Committee) considered the matter again. It noted that not much ministerial legislative business needed to be done in September but it continued:

It is no doubt undesirable that the executive enjoys a 80 day period free from parliamentary scrutiny; while noting that since 2005 it has been possible to table written questions and receive written answers to them in September.

There is also a widely held view, mistaken though it may be, that when the House is not sitting then Members are on holiday. **We recommend that the House in the new Parliament should be asked to decide on the issue of September sittings, along with other sittings issues, sufficiently early in its life to be able to decide whether to sit in September 2010.** [Recommendation 31]<sup>24</sup>

On 22 February 2010, when the House considered the Wright Committee Report, it agreed:

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<sup>20</sup> HC Deb 8 October 2007 c17

<sup>21</sup> HC Deb 8 November 2007 cc371-376

<sup>22</sup> HC Deb 18 October 2007 c967

<sup>23</sup> HC Deb 4 June 2009 c397

<sup>24</sup> Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons, *Rebuilding the House*, 24 November 2009, HC 1117 2008-09, para 100

That this House approves recommendation 31 of the First Report of the Select Committee on Reform of the House of Commons, Session 2008-09, HC 1117, insofar as it relates to an early decision in the next Parliament on sittings of the House in September 2010. -(*Steve McCabe.*)<sup>25</sup>

Following the general election in May 2010, the new Government brought forward a motion, on 15 June 2010, that allowed the House to agree:

That this House reaffirms the importance of its function of holding the Government to account: and accordingly asks the Government to put to this House specific proposals for sitting periods in September 2010.-(*Sir George Young.*)<sup>26</sup>

In the debate, Sir George Young, the Leader of the House explained that:

In February, the previous Parliament resolved that the new Parliament should have an early opportunity to decide on the issue of September sittings-indeed, sufficiently early to be able to decide on them this year. Motion 10 gives effect to that decision.

[...]

The House already sits for longer than almost any other comparative legislature in the democratic world, but it is obvious that the public do not easily understand why MPs are effectively unable to scrutinise the Government over the lengthy summer recesses, some of which have stretched out over a fairly long period of 82 days. I have already announced that, subject to the will of the House tonight, the House will sit for two weeks from 6 September. Unlike in previous September sittings that the House has experimented with, I fully expect there to be substantive business for the House to consider during that period. This is not a cosmetic change, but a declaration of intent.<sup>27</sup>

In the debate Clive Betts identified issues that would arise if the House determined to sit regularly in September, particularly surrounding the maintenance of the Palace of Westminster.<sup>28</sup> Despite these concerns, the motion was agreed to without a division.<sup>29</sup>

On 15 July 2010, the House agreed to sit from Monday 6 September to Thursday 16 September 2010.<sup>30</sup>

The decisions of June and July 2010 only provided for the House to sit in September 2010. The question of sitting in September 2011 onwards is being considered by the Procedure Committee:

**Mr Clive Betts (Sheffield South East) (Lab):** Two weeks ago, the Leader of the House announced a review of House sitting hours. Can he confirm that it will include a review of September sittings? Once it has taken place, will all matters, including September sittings, return to the House for a decision on a free vote? If so, will he provide to Members full information about the financial and other consequences for the long-term maintenance of the House of a shorter recess and less time to carry out maintenance during the summer?

**Sir George Young:** The Procedure Committee is indeed carrying out a review of the sitting hours of the House. It will include whether we should sit in September, as well

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<sup>25</sup> HC Deb 22 February 2010 c130

<sup>26</sup> HC Deb 15 June 2010 c846

<sup>27</sup> HC Deb 15 June 2010 cc783-784

<sup>28</sup> HC Deb 15 June 2010 cc803-805

<sup>29</sup> HC Deb 15 June 2010 c846

<sup>30</sup> HC Deb 15 July 2010 c1187

as the actual hours that we sit during the day. That has always been a House of Commons matter on which Members have had a free vote. There will also be an opportunity for the House authorities to raise the issue of the cost to the House if they do not have a long run during the summer recess to carry out certain capital work—although whether that should be decisive in determining whether the House sits in September is something on which I should like to reflect.<sup>31</sup>

### **3 Recess questions**

#### **3.1 Recess questions and written ministerial statements in 2006**

On 24 July 2006, the House agreed a motion that allowed Members to table named-day questions on three days in September (4, 6 and 11 September), for answer on three later days (11, 13 and 18 September, respectively) and allowed Ministers to give notice of Written Ministerial Statements on the earlier dates and make them on the later dates.<sup>32</sup>

When the House returned in October 2006, Jack Straw reported that a total of 732 questions had been asked by more than 100 Members during the summer recess, and that 35 written ministerial statements were made. He linked the answering of questions in September to the decision about sitting in September, saying that “I am in no doubt that, if we keep to the current recess arrangements, September questions are an important element”. But he also announced his intention that the House should debate the issue of September sittings before the end of the Session.<sup>33</sup>

Following the House’s decision on 1 November 2006 that it would no longer sit in September, unless recalled, Jack Straw said that “The House agreed in principle on 1 November that September questions should become permanent and I will make proposals to achieve that”. He also undertook to consider whether the period for answering questions in September could be extended.<sup>34</sup>

#### **3.2 A new Standing Order**

At Business Questions on 22 March 2007, Jack Straw announced that the House would debate motions relating to, among other things, “notices of questions during September” on 28 March 2007.<sup>35</sup> He subsequently published the following motion, which also provides for written ministerial statements to be made in September:

That the following Standing Order (Notices of Questions etc. during September) be made—

(1) Notices of questions for written answer on a named day by a Minister of the Crown may be given on three appointed tabling days, for answer on three appointed answering days, between 2nd and 21st September.

(2) A motion to appoint tabling days and answering days under paragraph (1) may be made by a Minister of the Crown; and the question on such a motion shall be put forthwith and may be decided, though opposed, after the moment of interruption.

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<sup>31</sup> HC Deb 4 November 2010 c1055

<sup>32</sup> HC Deb 24 July 2006 c707

<sup>33</sup> HC Deb 12 October 2006 c449

<sup>34</sup> HC Deb 27 November 2006 cc823-824

<sup>35</sup> HC Deb 22 March 2007 c947

(3) Notices of questions for named day answer on one of the appointed answering days, received by the Table Office on any day after the rising of the House for the summer adjournment, shall be treated as if given on—

(a) that day, if they are received on an appointed tabling day; or

(b) the next appointed tabling day, if they are received on any other day,

and a Member may not give notice of more than five such questions in respect of each appointed tabling day.

(4) Notwithstanding sub-paragraph (4)(a) of Standing Order No. 22 (Notices of questions, motions and amendments), no notice of a question may be given under this order for a day earlier than five days (excluding Saturday and Sunday) after the day on which the notice is given.

(5) A Minister of the Crown, being a Member of the House, may give notice on an appointed tabling day of his intention to make a ministerial statement in written form on an appointed answering day.

(6) In the event of a recall of the House under Standing Order No. 13 (Earlier meeting of the House in certain circumstances), the Speaker may publish a memorandum amending the arrangements made under this order.

The motion on notices of questions during September was debated along with motions on the Communications Allowance, lengthening the embargo period for select committee reports and the appointment of a managing trustee of the Parliamentary Pension Fund. Most of the debate concerned the Communications Allowance. However, the motion on September questions was welcomed on both sides of the House, although there were suggestions that it should be possible to table questions throughout the recess.

Jack Straw told the House that “the motion on notices of questions in September makes permanent the arrangements that we agreed on an experimental basis last September for taking written questions during September”. He also confirmed that the motion was worded to allow him to take into account “such things as party conferences” when prescribing “the precise days in September”.<sup>36</sup>

Although Theresa May welcomed the permanent arrangements for recess questions in September: “... it is absolutely right that Members should have the opportunity to hold Ministers to account. The system for questions and statements last year was a welcome intervention, and I am sure that the House is grateful to the Leader of the House for introducing it”, she saw “no reason why Members should not be able to table questions throughout the recess”. She said that she was disappointed that the Leader of the House had not proposed more tabling days.<sup>37</sup>

She agreed with an intervention from John Bercow that replies to questions should be timely; and Jack Straw confirmed that he would “seek to ensure that all those questions are answered in a timely way”.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> HC Deb 28 March 2007 c1513

<sup>37</sup> HC Deb 28 March 2007 c1528

<sup>38</sup> HC Deb 28 March 2007 cc1528-1529

David Heath, for the Liberal Democrats, also welcomed the motion, although he too would have liked to have been given more opportunities to table questions. But he appealed to Members to realise that tabling too many questions caused problems.<sup>39</sup>

### 3.3 Written questions and written ministerial statements in September

Information on the number of questions tabled for written answer in September 2006 and in September 2008 was provided in written ministerial statements.<sup>40</sup>

Table 1 provides details of the number of questions tabled and written ministerial statements issued in the summer recesses from 2006-2009.

**Table 1: Written questions tabled and written ministerial statements issued, summer recesses 2006-2009**

	<b>Written Questions Tabled</b>	<b>Written Ministerial Statements Issued</b>
September 2006	732	35
September 2007	772	17
September 2008	805	61
September 2009	800	33

Note: The written ministerial statements referred to above reported that 733 questions were tabled in 2006 and 807 in 2008.

Source: PIMS

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<sup>39</sup> HC Deb 28 March 2007 c1538

<sup>40</sup> HC Deb 31 October 2006 cc11WS-12WS; 9 October 2008 c20WS