



Petitions in the House of Commons since 1987-88

Parliamentary Information List

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Members of the House Commons may present petitions to the House on any matter.

Petitions may be presented formally in the House. The MP makes a brief statement regarding the subject of the petition (not a speech supporting it) and reads out the text of the petition in the Chamber, the petition is then recorded in Hansard and in the House's journals. The MP need not speak in favour of the petition. MPs may also present a petition informally at any time, by placing it in a green bag on the back of the Speaker's chair. There are certain [rules](#) that a Public Petition must comply with in order for a Member to present it to the House.

The presentation of a petition does not lead automatically to further action, either within the House or within Government. However, the Government does respond to many petitions presented in the House, as shown in this table. There is no requirement for Government to respond, or to do so in the same Parliamentary session in which the petition is presented.

In previous times, petitions have been used differently. At times in the nineteenth century, several thousand petitions were received in a single year; equally, at times in the twentieth century, very few were received. See the archived [Factsheet on Public Petitions](#) for historic information. Occasionally, identical petitions are presented by numerous Members, causing the number of petitions received to rise considerably.

The [system of electronic petitions](#) currently in existence is not administered by the House of Commons, but by the Cabinet Office. The Cabinet Office notifies the Backbench Business Committee of any e-petition which receives over 100,000 signatures, and the Committee must then decide whether to allocate time for a debate on the subject of the petition (it is not required to do so). The Government also responds to most e-petitions with over 10,000 signatures. For more information, see the Commons Library Note on [e-petitions, SN06450](#).

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[Guides to Parliament](#) – The House of Commons Information Office answers enquiries on the work, history and membership of the House of Commons. It also produces a range of publications about the House which are available for free in hard copy on request

[Education web site](#) – a web site for children and schools with information and activities about Parliament.

Any comments or corrections to the lists would be gratefully received and should be sent to: [Parliamentary Information Lists Editor](#), Parliament & Constitution Centre, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Session	Total petitions presented	Formal presentation (floor of House)	Informal presentation (via 'bag')	Petitions receiving observations (c)	Petitions on which no observations made (c)
1987-88 ^(b)	356	132	224	not available	not available
1988-89	227	125	102	not available	not available
1989-90	960	235	725	not available	not available
1990-91	183	87	96	not available	not available
1991-92 ^(a)	452	56	396	not available	not available
1992-93 ^(b)	2651	137	2514	not available	not available
1993-94	102	60	42	not available	not available
1994-95	119	57	62	73	46
1995-96	77	49	28	39	38
1996-97 ^(a)	55	40	15	24	31
1997-98 ^(b)	99	73	26	51	48
1998-99	99	56	43	36	63
1999-2000	87	67	20	42	45
2000-01 ^(a)	35	28	7	22	13
2001-02 ^(b)	131	109	22	64	67
2002-03	220	194	26	178	42
2003-04	128	112	16	82	46
2004-05 ^(a)	51	44	7	38	13
2005-06 ^(b)	293	257	36	207	86
2006-07	161	142	19	112	49
2007-08	221	195	26	220 ^(d)	1
2008-09	123	111	12	97	26
2009-10 ^(a)	393	135	258	343	50
2010-12 ^(b)	187	159	28	176	11
2012-13	146	132	14	128	18
2013-14	175	137	38	163	12

Sources: [Sessional Returns 1987-88 to 2013-14](#)
[Public Petitions , House of Commons Information Office Factsheet P7](#)
[Public petitions to the House of Commons: Rules](#)

Notes:

- (a) Short sessions [Oct 1991 to Mar 1992; Oct 1996 to Mar 1997; Dec 2000 to May 2001; Nov 2004 to Apr 2005, Nov 2009 to Apr 2010]
- (b) Long sessions [Jun 1987 to Nov 1988; Apr 1992 to Oct 1993; May 1997 to Oct 1998; Jun 2001 to Nov 2002; May 2005 to Nov 2006; May 2010 to May 2012]
- (c) Statistics on Government observations to petitions not available before 1994-95. These figures do not include petitions to which the departmental response has not yet been recorded
- (d) Of these, 21 were replies to Petitions presented in earlier Sessions of Parliament