

# DR.S.KASTHURI

## MODERNGOVERNMENTS

II UG History English Medium and History  
Tamil Medium

# STATE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT (2009)

- ◉ <http://youtu.be/cDLL45b0uEo>
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# SUMMARY

- ◉ The role of parliament and the British constitution- The Westminster Model
- ◉ Bicameral legislature- Houses of Parliament
- ◉ British political parties
- ◉ Common law and statute law
- ◉ How a bill becomes law
- ◉ Elections in UK: National, European Union and Local
- ◉ Referendums and Brexit
- ◉ Councillor Hattersley

# THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENT

- ◉ Checking the work of the Government (cabinet members).
- ◉ Making laws
- ◉ Debating
- ◉ Check and approve Government spending and taxation
- ◉ Parliament's authority
- ◉ Relations with other institutions, e.g. European Union

# THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION

- ◉ Not a single codified document, but a series of sources:
- ◉ Statute Law: Acts of Parliament etc
- ◉ Common Law: developed and applied by the courts
- ◉ Conventions: uncodified practices deemed binding
- ◉ Works of Authority: including Erskine May, Dicey and others

# SOME KEY FEATURES OF THE WESTMINSTER MODEL

- ◉ Sovereignty of Parliament
- ◉ Bicameral legislature
- ◉ Unitary state
- ◉ Constitutional monarch with formal (prerogative) powers
- ◉ Cabinet government
- ◉ Independent, impartial civil service
- ◉ Rule of law
- ◉ First Past the Post Electoral System
- ◉ Two party system

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

- The UK public elects 650 Members of Parliament (MPs) to represent their interests and concerns in the House of Commons. MPs consider and propose new laws, and can scrutinize government policies by asking ministers questions about current issues either in the Commons Chamber or in Committees.



# HOUSE OF LORDS

- The House of Lords, also known as the House of Peers, is the upper house of the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Membership is granted by appointment or else by heredity or official function. Like the House of Commons, it meets in the Palace of Westminster.





# BRITISH POLITICAL PARTIES

- ◉ Labour-247
- ◉ Conservatives-311
- ◉ Liberal Democrats- 12
- ◉ Green Party- 1
- ◉ Scottish National Party -35
- ◉ Democratic Unionist Party - 10
- ◉ United Kingdom Independent Party- 0
- ◉ Change UK-5
- ◉ Sinn Fein-7



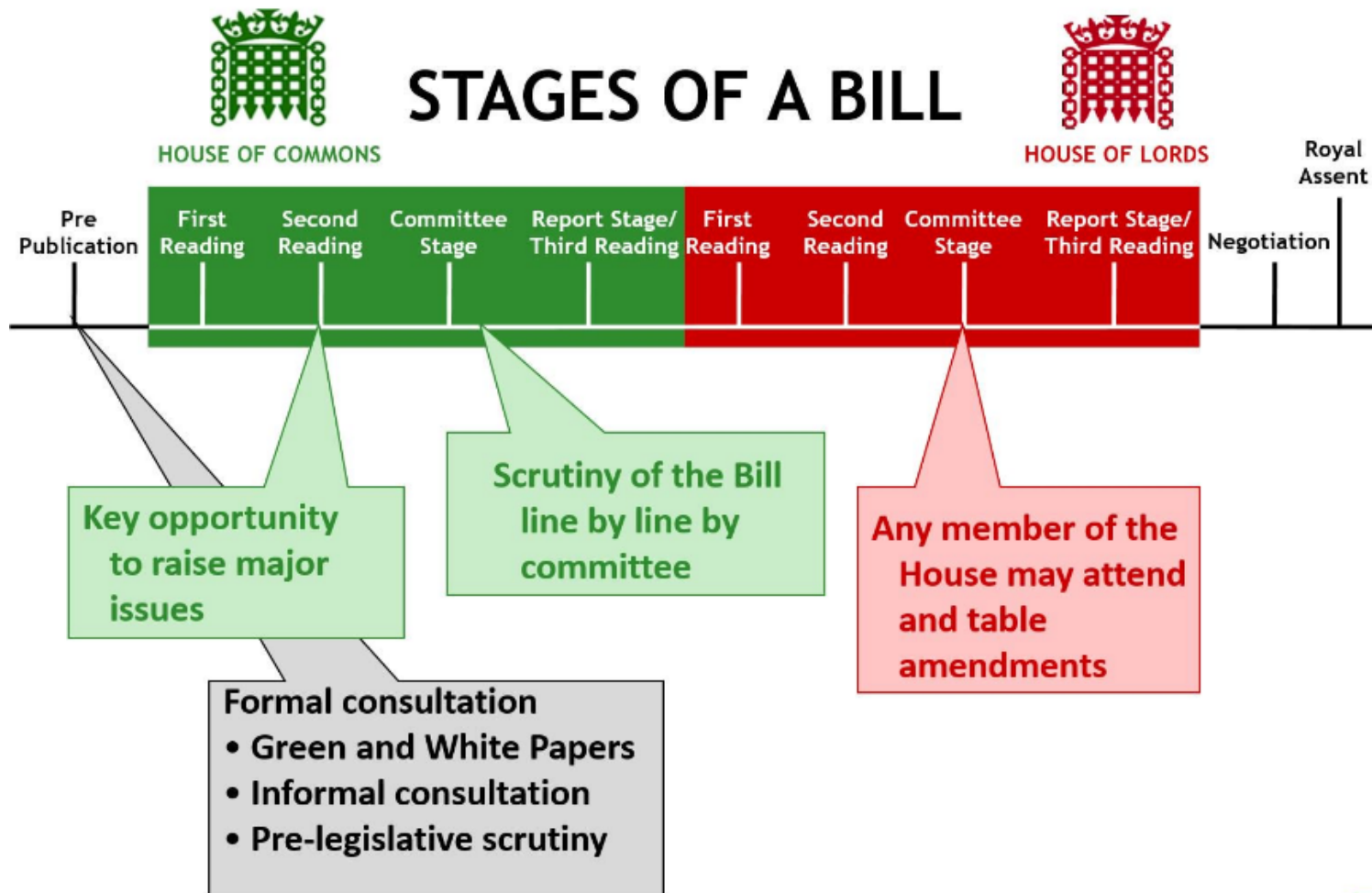
# COMMON LAW

- ◉ The part of English law that is derived from custom and judicial precedent rather than statutes.
- ◉ In common-law jurisdictions like the British Commonwealth countries and the United States, most torts (civil wrongs) were developed under the common law. These include:
  - ◉ Assault, Battery
  - ◉ Invasion of Privacy
  - ◉ Negligence
  - ◉ Trespass to Land

# STATUTE LAW

- ◉ An act of a legislature that declares, proscribes, or commands something; a specific law, expressed in writing. A statute is a written law passed by a legislature at state level, in the case of the UK.
- ◉ European Union law is statute law in the United Kingdom, this is one of the main reasons why Brexit is being delayed as it is so hard to amend it.

# HOW A BILL BECOMES LAW IN THE UK



# ELECTIONS

- ◉ First Past the Post electoral system
- ◉ UK elections are always on a Thursday
- ◉ General election- Every 5 years, for Members of the House of Commons
- ◉ Local Government- 4 year term of office
- ◉ European Parliament- Every 4 years



# REFERENDUMS

- A referendum is a vote on a single issue.
- Examples of Referendums:
  - "At present, the UK uses the "first past the post" system to elect MPs to the House of Commons. Should the "alternative vote" system be used instead?". 2011
  - "Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?" 2016

# BREXIT

## What is Brexit?

- ◉ Brexit is short for "British exit" - and is the word people use to talk about the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union (EU).

## What is the EU?

- ◉ The EU is a political and economic union of 28 countries that trade with each other and allow citizens to move easily between the countries to live and work.
- ◉ The UK joined the EEC (European Economic Community) in 1973, which became the European Union in 1992.

# BREXIT

## Why is the UK leaving?

- A referendum was held on Thursday 23 June 2016 when voters were asked just one question - whether the UK should leave or remain in the European Union.
- The Leave side won by nearly 52% to 48% - 17.4m votes to 16.1m- but the exit didn't happen straight away.
- It was due to take place on 29 March 2019 - but the departure date has been delayed because the MPs voted down the withdrawal agreement in Parliament three times.