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Thank you for contacting me about this important matter.

I value the contribution made by those who come to live in the UK. I have always acknowledged that the movement of people around the world has enriched our society, our economy, and our culture.

I am therefore alarmed at the increasing use of anti-migrant rhetoric across the mainstream political and media landscape.

I strongly disagree with assertions that migration has a negative impact on our public services and housing supply. I note that it is not migrants, but Governments, who have underfunded and privatised the NHS, failed to build council housing or enforce rent controls on landlords.

As such I share concerns regarding the Government's proposals laid out in 'A Fairer Pathway to Settlement', and currently open for consultation, which explicitly seeks views on "options to reduce the current forecast volumes" of people migrating to the UK.

I am aware that the consultation includes plans to extend the standard qualifying period for permanent residence, also known as indefinite leave to remain, ILR, or settlement, from five to ten years, as part of plans for a new "Earned Settlement", which, as the Work Rights Centre has pointed out, "effectively penalise people who get sick, are exploited, or become destitute".

It is particularly troubling to me that the Home Secretary proposes to apply these changes retrospectively, so that everyone who is currently in the UK and not settled yet will be affected once the rules are updated.

I am all too conscious of the anxiety that these proposals, which the Workers' Rights Centre has called "an extraordinary betrayal of migrant communities", has caused to people in the UK who now face years of uncertainty over their status. The charity Praxis, which works to support migrants in the UK, explains that "attaining settlement means no longer having to worry about visa fees, being turned away from state support, or waiting for Home Office decision" and that the doubling of the qualifying period means that "most people will be forced to wait an entire decade before they can have any certainty about their future."

I understand that more than 45 human rights groups including the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and Asylum Matters have published a statement opposing the proposals and the accompanying consultation "in its entirety", calling

them “fundamentally racist and classist”, and that trade unions including Unite and Unison, the UK’s largest unions have opposed the proposals.

I am utterly opposed to all of these proposals.

I spoke at the Westminster Hall Debate on Indefinite Leave to Remain on 8 September 2025.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2025-09-08/debates/25EC2767-BBFF-4FE8-8F52-65B2C28CED10/IndefiniteLeaveToRemain>

I also spoke on Immigration Reforms during a debate on Tuesday 17 March 2026.

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2026-03-17/debates/4F72CE9C-6D61-4E45-BC07-E520ACF795B7/ImmigrationReforms>

In both debates, I have firmly highlighted the concerns above and the issues you have raised.

The incredible efforts of refugee and migrant rights campaigners across the UK have demonstrated that overall, many want a fair asylum system, based on compassion and human rights.

I have and will always stand up for refugee and migrant rights - both in Parliament and beyond.

Thank you for contacting me about this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Office of Apsana Begum
Member of Parliament for Poplar and Limehouse

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