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Northern Ireland Office
Parliament Buildings
Belfast BT4 3ST

The Lord Alderdice FRC Psych
Alliance Party of Northern Ireland
88 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1HE

2 June 1998

Dear John,

I wrote to you on 10 March with details of the Government's plans for a Bill on the Registration of Political Parties. This letter is simply to advise you of a change which will simplify our original proposal.

As you know we want to provide an easy and straightforward system for the registration of political parties. Under our proposals any political party which wishes to submit lists of candidates for elections to the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and European Parliament will have to register to be eligible for party political broadcasts and to protect their name and emblem from use by others.

In order to put in place an easy and workable system of registration we no longer think it necessary to provide sanctions on party leaders for non-registration. This does not, of course, rule out some element of formal compulsion being introduced in the future linked to whatever Lord Neill may recommend on party political funding.

The Second Reading of the Registration of Political parties Bill is on Thursday 4 June.

MARJORIE MOWLAM