

9th February 2015

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about mitochondrial donation.

As you may know, after an impassioned debate where all the issues were thoroughly examined, Parliament has now approved new scientific techniques to help prevent mothers passing on serious mitochondrial diseases to their children.

It is estimated that 1 in 6,500 children are born every year in the UK with a serious mitochondrial DNA disorder. The intention in making these regulations is to ensure that mothers who carry faulty mitochondria can have healthy children free from devastating and often deadly conditions caused by serious mitochondrial disease.

The reviews that have taken place so far on this issue have found no evidence that these techniques are unsafe and the scientific community has made clear its support for the introduction of these particular regulations.

The view of Parliament was that it would be wrong to block the scientific opportunity now available that would alleviate suffering for children who would otherwise be affected by this horrible disease.

However, I personally had concerns about the unforeseen consequences of genetically engineering a human cell and I know that others also have legitimate objections on moral and religious grounds.

I am aware, as someone who believes that I have been elected to Parliament to represent the views of my constituents, that there is divided opinion on this issue and, given my own uncertainty on the issue, I chose to abstain from voting.

Thank you again for taking the time to write to me on this issue.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP