

JOHN BERCOW



Speaker of the House of Commons (2009-2019)

John Bercow is a former Speaker of the House of Commons and a hugely experienced ex-Parliamentarian who served as MP for Buckingham for 22 years. John sat as Speaker for over ten years, making him the longest-serving holder of the office since 1945. John Bercow is widely acknowledged to be a reformer who made a difference within the Chamber and outside it.

As Speaker of the House of Commons from 2009 to 2019, John was the first Speaker since the second world war to be elected and re-elected four times. He was in the Chair during a period of intense political challenges, including the aftermath of the financial crisis, the formation of the first Coalition Government since 1945 and, above all, the Brexit saga. A key priority of his Speakership was to promote diversity, both in staff posts and in the opportunity to gain internships in Parliament. John personally welcomed to the House of Commons, Her Majesty the Queen, the Pope, President Obama, Chancellor Merkel, the Chinese President and the Irish President, alongside many other political leaders and ambassadors.

Born in 1963, John was educated at Finchley Manorhill School and the University of Essex, where he graduated with a First Class Honours Degree in Government. He worked as a public affairs consultant at Rowland Sallingbury Casey (Saatchi & Saatchi Group) from 1988 to 1995, rising from Account Executive to Board Director in five years before he became a Special Adviser to the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and a Special Adviser to the Secretary of State for National Heritage. He was initially elected to Parliament as the Conservative Member for Buckingham in May 1997. John held a total of five Shadow Ministerial roles, including serving in the Shadow Cabinet as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury. In 2002, he resigned in protest at his party's opposition to unmarried and same-sex couples adopting children. He later became Shadow Secretary of State for International Development before returning to the backbenches in 2004. From then until his election as Speaker in 2009, John served on the International Development Select Committee, visiting South Africa, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Botswana, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Burma. In 2007-8, at the request of Prime Minister Gordon Brown, John led a review of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs. This resulted in the Bercow Report and an additional £52 million for those services. During his time in Parliament, John won no fewer than seventeen awards for his work, including four honorary doctorates. In addition, he has served as Patron, President or Vice-President of more than a dozen charities, focusing in particular on children and young people.

Topics (Selection):

- Experiences in Westminster - Stories, Lessons and People that have Shaped my Career
- Unique Insights into Parliament
- British Politics and Brexit
- Thoughts on Democracy in the Age of Social Media, Populism and Uncertainty
- Lessons in Leading Change

Publications (Selection):

- Unspeakable, 2020