

George Osborne: undermining democracy

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Democracy is entirely dependent upon the existence of effective opposition to the government of the day. I am aware that some are discussing whether we have such an opposition at present; that is not my concern now. Instead I am deeply troubled to [note that the Guardian has reported](#) that:

The Labour party is set to lose more than £1m a year after George Osborne announced plans for a 19% cut in state funding for opposition parties.

The move will hit the finances of Labour, the SNP, the Lib Dems, Greens and other smaller parties.

The text of the spending review confirms that “the government proposes to reduce Short money allocations by 19%, in line with the average savings made from unprotected Whitehall departments over this spending review”.

This is absolutely ridiculous, not is there any logic to it. The job of the UK opposition parties has not reduced because of government cuts. Indeed, it may have increased. And the value of democracy should be undiminished. But Osborne has decided to propose a cut that is wholly unjustified.

Why do that? The answer is obvious. All the opposition parties will now have to put effort into reversing this change - which will in all likelihood happen. But, in the meantime other cuts will receive less attention. Just as the government might want.

But in the meantime the message is clear: the value of democracy is diminishing in the eyes of this government, a theme that has long been recounted on this blog.