

Democracy is at risk - but not just from social media

Published: January 13, 2026, 6:16 am

According to the [Guardian](#):

Democracy is at risk unless the government and regulators take urgent action to combat a growing crisis of data manipulation, disinformation and so-called fake news, a parliamentary committee is expected to say.

In damning conclusions to a report leaked by former Vote Leave campaign strategist Dominic Cummings before its official publication on Sunday, the digital, culture, media and sport (DCMS) committee adds to the growing calls for tougher government regulation of social media companies. It accuses them of profiting from misleading material and raises concerns about Russian involvement in British politics.

I cannot disagree about democracy being at risk. It is. Nor can I dispute that the issues that they raise are important. But let me also be clear: they're not the big issue.

There are big issues that threaten our democracy that need higher priority than tackling social media companies.

Campaign funding is one such issue.

And enforcing the rules is another.

With the requirement that those winning inappropriately be barred from office and that elections be re-run.

Then there is party funding, which needs to be by the state.

And funding for parliament and its work - where MP committees are chronically underfunded - needs to be reformed.

Whilst we're at it, we need 650 MPs.

We do not need 800 Lords. In fact we don't need the Lords at all. We need a second,

regionally elected chamber of members with long terms, but time limited service.

We do need proportional representation.

We need a constitution.

And a Bill of Rights.

We need ministers who respect parliament.

We need an elected head of state.

We need limits on the Crown prerogative.

We need law on referenda.

We need to revive local authorities.

We need devolution to be respected.

And the hotch potch of laws on mayors needs reform: these look horribly like fiefdoms.

We need freedom of speech. Including for charities. They are now denied it.

We need strong trade union laws: civil society is part of our democracy.

I could go on.

But I hope you get my point. Democracy is under threat. But not just from social media. MPs should be looking closer to home for some of the problems we face.