

The House of Lords tells the Commons to think again

Published: January 20, 2026, 2:58 am

It is quite extraordinary that the government was heavily defeated on Brexit in the House of Lords last night and yet almost none of the media have taken any note at all.

[Reuters](#) is an exception, noting that:

The House of Lords passed an amendment on Wednesday calling for the government to negotiate a customs union with the European Union, giving Prime Minister Theresa May a potential new headache in her Brexit plans.

The upper parliamentary chamber backed a cross-party amendment to a trade bill, calling for the government to take all steps to enable the United Kingdom to participate in a new EU customs union after it leaves the bloc.

The defeat was by more than 60 votes.

Now the Commons must vote on the amendment: it finally has an option to reject May's proposals. In itself this is significant. Parliament may get a chance to, after all, take back control from an out of control, out of touch, and frankly crazed executive.

As a democrat I instinctively have concerns about the continued existence of the House of Lords. And yet it continually proves its worth. It is an institution that has no right to exist in theory. There are moments when practice proves otherwise. This was one.