

Funding the Future

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This is in the [FT this morning](#), with regard to the now 128 (or more) Labour MPs who are threatening to vote against Labour over cuts to disability and other benefits:

One Labour MP said a senior minister had called them on Tuesday to say that a major rebellion next week "would cause a fresh leadership contest" and that "this could be the start of the end for Keir".

The person said they had separately been called by a different cabinet minister who asked them to remove their name from the list and promised to work hard to try to get the welfare reforms softened.

Another Labour MP said ministers and whips were telling MPs that a major rebellion next week "will result in a general election being called" and that "it's going to bring the government down".

The person said this argument did not phase them. "I would be happy to see a leadership contest. I think perhaps it's time for change," they said.

So, the logic is that Starmer is over according to the Labour whips, and so the country must go to the polls and return Farage, which I have always assumed is what Starmer really wants. That is the threat here.

What the whips are saying is that if Starmer is beaten, he will not resign as Labour leader, as he should, but will try to call a general election.

But, actually, he does not have the right to do that.

The motion opposing the government is not on a confidence issue.

Nor is it actually challenging the policy; it is simply asking that it be deferred.

And Labour can still, very obviously, command a majority in the House on a confidence issue, meaning that there can be no justification for a general election.

So, this suggestion that there will be a general election is absurd. The King has no right to grant one to a party that can command the confidence of the House, but which has blundered on an issue.

But that does not mean that Keir Starmer's government might not fall, because that is entirely possible.

All it means is that Starmer might be consigned to political oblivion. There will be no tears about that.