

Dear Nigel,

In a hastily composed email to you this afternoon, I withdrew my membership from the CBA. On reflection, conscious of and grateful for the work that you, Tony, Mike and many others have invested on our behalf in the recent past, I feel I owe you an explanation.

It seems that we have been at cross purposes. You see, I believed that the fight, the strikes, the placards, the chants, the 'no returns' policy, standing shoulder to shoulder with our solicitor colleagues, were all aimed at saving the justice system. Yet the 'deal' exposed today, serves only as a temporary reprieve to the bank balances of some amongst us. I thought we were fighting to retain and improve a justice system in which those accused by the state are properly represented until they are justly acquitted or fairly convicted; a system which victims can engage with and in which society can have confidence. I thought it was about access to justice, defending the children of the poor, punishing the wrongdoer. I thought it was about ensuring that the profession properly represented society, both through gender equality and through ethnic and social diversity. I thought it was about supporting the junior Bar, ensuring the longevity of our profession and, in due course, ensuring a diverse and representative judiciary. And, of course, it was about fair pay in recognition of our hard work, of our commitment and of our skills.

Unfortunately, today's announcement delivers none of that. In exchange for a 15-month reprieve, we have abandoned our solicitor colleagues at a uniquely united and strong moment in our history. We've abandoned our future clients to an uncertain but almost certainly unjust future. We've abandoned any hope of a diverse, vibrant and skilled profession and have diluted our credibility in society. This is not a victory for our justice system. It is a cancer fought temporarily into remission only to return in a year's time when our immune system will be significantly weakened.

I cannot have this deal carried out in my name and therefore I have no option but to withdraw my membership. But in a parting request, I ask you to rethink, to return to Grayling and to tell him we will not accept his carrot, and I ask you to call on your membership to stand united with their colleagues on the picket lines next week in the hope of winning the war, not just the battle.

Best regards

Brenda Campbell