



PRESS CONFERENCE

AUGUST 9TH 2021

SPEECH BY REFORM UK PARTY LEADER, RICHARD TICE



Imagine you're a bank with a new business customer is very successful in its early months of operation, growing fast, with a product that people seem to want. Lots of activity passes through the account with the relationship. Like most businesses then things flatten off as competitors respond. Then a pandemic comes along and things go a lot quieter, but the customer is still there, looking to emerge and compete as the pandemic subsides. The customer has big plans for the next couple of years in the run up to a huge event. You know that millions of pounds will come in and out of your relationship with the customer.

The new customer is of course the political party now known as Reform UK. The bank is Metro Bank. Why would you terminate a successful working relationship with a customer when you know that millions of pounds is likely to pass through the account. You can be reassured that the customer is also regulated and monitored by the Electoral Commission so should be squeaky clean. You know that the leader is a successful entrepreneur who knows how to get things done and could even introduce new business to you.

Seem odd? Inexplicable?

Is it a coincidence that Reform U.K. is the only political party in the polls that is challenging the Government on issues fundamental to the nature of the U.K. as a free libertarian nation. The only party promising to give all our freedoms back. The only party challenging vaccine passports. The only party challenging the plan to vaccinate children with an emergency approved vaccine against a virus that children are very unlikely to suffer from. We are one of just 5 political parties that will have over 500 candidates at the next election in the U.K.

So is it a coincidence that when Reform U.K. is providing this challenge to the Government, our clearing bankers suddenly, inexplicably give just 60 days to close the bank account.

To put in context how unusual this is, I have been in business for over 30 years. I have been a director of over 100 companies, with many hundreds of bank accounts, with over 100 loans, in some 12 countries across 4 continents. Never, not once has any of those banks asked me to close a bank account and terminate a relationship.

This is not ordinary course of business. This is extraordinary. Unprecedented. It is clearly the result of political pressure being exerted on someone somewhere somehow. I cannot think of any other reason. Someone wants to make life difficult for Reform UK. Perhaps we should take it as a compliment!

The optimist in me hopes that some nice bank manager in a traditional branch somewhere wonderful in the U.K. will ring us up and say they would be delighted to have our clearing business.

The pragmatist in me knows that we need a plan B and C.

Surely if we want to live in a thriving democracy then we need and should welcome small challenger political parties with new ideas to help encourage, push and probe, to shape and influence with more debate, more discussion. This cannot happen though if one is prevented from having clearing bank facilities.

I am thus writing today to the Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey, to ask if in these exceptional situation where political parties cannot secure clearing bank facilities then the Bank itself will provide these clearing facilities to ensure that democracy can survive thrive and flourish with new ideas and parties. At the moment to be honest it does not feel the mother of all democracies but more like being under the godfather of an autocracy.

