

## [Scottish Independence](#)

September 24, 2015

### **Nicola Sturgeon challenges leaders not to oppose New Scottish Independence Referendum**

**NICOLA Sturgeon has challenged the Scottish Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders not to oppose the holding of a second referendum on independence.**



The First Minister made the call in response to Kezia Dugdale and Willie Rennie's controversial decisions to allow their colleagues free rein over how they would vote in the event of a future poll.

This week both Ms Dugdale and Mr Rennie said they would not prevent parliamentary colleagues or party members from campaigning for independence if a second referendum was to arise – but both parties maintain their opposition to a second ballot taking place.

Ms Sturgeon said yesterday that she welcomed the Labour and Lib Dem leaders' new stance and that it showed they acknowledged that support for independence is growing beyond the SNP.

“This is where I issue a challenge to both Kezia and Willie,” Ms Sturgeon said. “I think if they are to be taken seriously on what they have said. If what they have said is to be credible and ... if what they have said is to be coherent, then they have to take it to its logical conclusion.

“It is not going to cut much ice with supporters of independence in their own parties to say in one breath, ‘You know, if there’s another referendum you can stand up for what you believe in’. But in the next breath say, ‘But we think a referendum should be ruled out forever and a day’.

“My challenge to Kez and Willie is this. If opinion doesn’t significantly shift from the referendum last year – or if there is no material change in circumstances from the debate last year – it wouldn’t be right to hold a second referendum.

“So the challenge is: do they agree with me on the converse? If we do see opinion shift or if we do see a material change in circumstances, surely they must agree that it would be equally wrong for any one politician to rule out a referendum indefinitely in those circumstances.”

Ms Sturgeon also said, at a lunch hosted by the Scottish Parliamentary Journalists’ Association, that the SNP was “looking critically” at last year’s referendum campaign to see what lessons can be learned. Although, she added, there were no current plans for a re-run.

After the controversy over Alex Salmond’s plan for an independent Scotland to formally share Sterling with the rest of the UK, Ms Sturgeon admitted that the currency question was always going to be a difficult issue for the SNP.

She said: “We have been and will continue to think about all aspects and issues in play in the referendum, what worked and what perhaps we didn’t do as effectively. What were the barriers to people voting Yes, that if we were ever in another independence referendum we might want to do differently?”

Although last year’s No vote demonstrated that a majority of Scots have misgivings about independence, Ms Sturgeon suggested the Yes vote was absolutely solid with her supporters backing the break-up of the UK whatever the circumstances.

In a warning to the SNP’s opponents, she said: “In my experience those who voted Yes last year by and large continue to support independence and they will continue to support independence in all circumstances because they have decided, out of a process of deep consideration, that’s the best future for Scotland.”

Last night Labour and the Lib Dems reacted coolly to Ms Sturgeon’s referendum challenge.

A Scottish Labour spokesman said: “The Bourne films will always be on ITV; QI will always be on Dave; and Nicola Sturgeon will always be on about another referendum.

“Nicola Sturgeon could have talked about anything when she appeared before Scotland’s journalists – for example the fact that under the SNP government more than 6,000 children in Scotland leave primary school unable to read properly.

“Instead she spoke about another referendum, which tells you all you need to know about the SNP’s priorities. Scotland is fed-up with repeats.”

A Scottish Lib Dem spokeswoman said: “Another day, another attempt to distract people from the SNP’s record on GPs, the police and school standards. The First Minister needs to do much more than spend every day just rearranging words to try to get a second referendum.”

Ms Sturgeon also said the SNP intended to knock on half a million doors across Scotland before Christmas in its bid to win a majority at next May’s Scottish election.

She also outlined the SNP’s plans to work with Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour Party to form a “united” opposition at Westminster. Although she said there were “huge question marks” about Mr Corbyn’s ability to make it to No10, she said the two parties could work together to oppose the renewal of Trident.

Ms Sturgeon said: “The SNP will be looking over the next month for parliamentary opportunities to galvanise the opposition to the renewal of Trident. I very much hope that Jeremy Corbyn will ensure that Labour, all of the Labour group, come behind that effort, that we don’t want £150 billion on a new generation of nuclear weapons.”

In addition, she has written to Mr Corbyn in an attempt to persuade the UK Labour leader to support her bid to devolve trade union legislation to Holyrood.

Arguing that transferring power over employment law to Edinburgh would protect Scottish workers from Conservative trade union reform, she revealed the SNP would put down an amendment to the Scotland Bill to try to achieve its devolution.

In her letter, she said: “In stark contrast to the atmosphere in the House of Commons, the strength of feeling about workers’ rights among the vast majority of MSPs means that such draconian legislation would quite simply never see the light of day in Scotland.

“This means the Scotland Bill is a golden opportunity to protect workers in Scotland. I am sure you will agree that this is a prize worth aiming for.”

The First Minister said the Scottish Government would take action to negate the impact of the UK government’s changes to working tax credits, claiming that they would result in 22,000 Scottish pupils, aged three to 15, losing free school meals.

Another 2,000 two-year-olds would become ineligible for childcare and a free school meal.

“The Scottish Government will mitigate the effects on children and families who stand to become ineligible following these changes,” Ms Sturgeon said.

<http://scottishindependence.com/2015/09/nicola-sturgeon-challenges-leaders-not-to-oppose-new-scottish-independence-referendum/>