I am a proud Scot and a proud graduate of Glasgow University. I grew up in a council flat in Gourock and was the first person in my family to go to university, where I received a robust, challenging and free-thinking education which shaped me for the rest of my life.

So I was horrified to learn of the Scottish Government’s attempts to exert greater control over the composition and governance of Scotland’s universities and higher education institutions by means of the Higher Education Governance Bill.

Why seek to fix what isn’t broken? Our universities and colleges are the envy of the world, and attract students from the rest of the UK, the EU, and far beyond, as well as from across Scotland itself. These young people come in search of a top-class, scholarly, independent learning environment, not one which is governed by political influence, cronyism or string-pulling. Surely students should be studying what the best academic minds in the country see fit to teach them, rather than a one size fits all education decided by committee, and possibly in an intake consisting of government led quotas, rather than academic merit?

History - my subject - shows that seeking to control higher education is never a healthy tendency.

Indeed, the dictionary definition of a totalitarian regime is one that attempts to "control virtually all aspects of the social life, including the economy, EDUCATION, art, science, private life and morals of citizens." (my caps)

This is not what Scotland is about and I urge members to vote against the Bill.