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Dear Clare

I am writing to express my thanks to you, and all of the members of the Social Security Committee, for your contribution to our work in bringing the Social Security (Scotland) Bill into being. It's my opinion that Committee's input showed our parliamentary system in its best light throughout the process.

I have always believed that the development of the new Scottish social security system should be an open and collaborative project, and I appreciate the way in which you and all of the members of Committee took the opportunity to engage with the many issues, and the various stakeholder communities of interest involved, in such a positive and constructive manner.

The Scottish Parliament voted to pass the Social Security (Scotland) Bill on 25 April 2018, which will, following Royal Assent, lay the foundation for a new Scottish social security system. It's no exaggeration to say that this is a significant and historic moment and one which marks an achievement that we can all be rightly proud of.

That said, there is much that remains to be done. Delighted though I am with the successful conclusion of the Bill process, I must also look to the future and the next stage in the programme of work, to open the doors of our new social security agency and make the first Scottish social security benefit payments.

I look forward to working with you and the other members of the Committee, during this next stage, and to the successful delivery of the Scottish social security system we all want to see – a system with dignity, fairness and respect at its heart.

Kind regards

JEANE FREEMAN