ABOUT US
UNITED AGAINST SEPARATION is a grassroots campaign group that supports Scotland remaining part of the United Kingdom. With over 65,000 supporters on Facebook, we have the largest grassroots social media campaign of any group opposed to separation.

OUR VIEW
Firstly we would like to welcome this inquiry as we share some of the concerns raised by the Committee and we believe that not enough is being done to strengthen the United Kingdom. The only solution currently provided by all the main Pro-UK political parties appears to be to continue devolving more and more powers to the Scottish Parliament and other devolved institutions without recognising this undermines the UK Parliament and the nation state.

On the 18th of September over 2 million people voted for Scotland to remain part of the United Kingdom, this decision was decisive and the UK Parliament and Her Majesty’s Government now have a clear mandate to strengthen Scotland’s place within the United Kingdom. Over a year has now passed since the referendum and sadly nothing has been done to address the serious problems facing the union, this has led to a void that has been exploited by the SNP and resulted in increased support for their cause.

Urgent action is now needed to stabilise the devolution settlement, strengthen the Union, and prevent more damage being done to the United Kingdom. There are a lot of different actions that could be taken, much of which does not require legislation, and would not be expensive to implement.

Below is a list of recommendations we believe the UK Parliament, Her Majesty’s Government, and political parties that support the United Kingdom should take.

RECOMMENDATIONS
On the current Scotland Bill before Parliament:
Defend the sovereignty of the United Kingdom and UK Parliament
The United Kingdom is a country and sovereign state with a sovereign UK Parliament at Westminster. No steps should be taken that undermine the sovereignty of the UK Parliament or the status of the United Kingdom as a sovereign country.

We are extremely concerned about attempts to amend the current Scotland bill to more deeply entrench the Scottish Parliament. The current wording meets the commitment made in the vow, no amendment should be supported that in any way could be viewed as transferring sovereignty to the Scottish Parliament or limiting further the power of the UK Parliament to abolish or change the Scottish Parliament, nor should the UK Parliament be prohibited from legislating on devolved matters when necessary. The UK Is not a federal state, ultimate legislative power and authority rests with the UK Parliament which has chosen to devolve some of those powers to the devolved institutions. The principle of UK parliamentary sovereignty must not be undermined further.

Do not allow the SNP to abolish the British Transport Police in Scotland
The Scotland Bill currently proposes transferring policing of the railways to the Scottish Parliament, whilst this was part of the Smith Commission recommendations, it was never part of the agreement to allow the SNP to abolish the British Transport Police in Scotland which they have announced they intend to do. This is strongly opposed by unions, and by the British Transport Police themselves, and all 3 of main pro UK political parties in Scotland, yet the power to do it is still going to be devolved?
We strongly recommend an amendment to the Scotland Bill to ensure that the British Transport Police remains a Great Britain wide organisation and to prevent the SNP Government from having the power to abolish it in Scotland. The Scottish Parliament could be given greater oversight, but for many reasons including the security of our railways and to prevent the further undermining and extinction of another British organisation in Scotland, the current legislation must be changed.

**On Devolution for England:**

**Do not risk further harm to the United Kingdom by introducing “English Votes for English Laws”**

We recognise that the current devolution settlement is not symmetrical and given the nature of the United Kingdom and its constituent parts, it never will be. There will always be differences between each part of the United Kingdom and this will always be exploited by those who seek the destruction of our country, but the solution is not a change that will make the situation worse. The greatest threat of nationalism still remains Scottish nationalism, attempts to encourage or appease English nationalism will fuel even more support for separatism across the United Kingdom, including in England. “EVEL” will not stop an English nationalist from saying “it is not fair that Scotland has a Parliament but England does not have one too”, but it will result in Scottish nationalists claiming discrimination against Scottish MPs.

The previous proposals put before the House of Commons are unacceptable and extremely dangerous. We strongly urge all political parties and especially the Government to think about the long term consequences of such proposals and recognise that the rushed nature of devolution in the 1990s has led to an increased threat to the United Kingdom. Repeating this mistake by rushing through fundamental changes to standing orders which would restrict the rights of some MPs based on their location is not just an unworkable option that solves nothing, but it is an attack on the Union that makes the situation far worse.

To prevent a rise in English nationalism, the best approach is to encourage support and understanding for the United Kingdom, something that can easily be done with the right policies. Some of the recommendations below are proposals that would not only strengthen Scotland’s place in the United Kingdom but strengthen the whole of the United Kingdom.

**On ensuring that the devolution settlement is stable and not undermining the United Kingdom:**

**No second referendum**

Scotland has voted to remain part of the United Kingdom in what was described by the SNP at the time as a once in a generation vote. It is totally unacceptable for a second referendum to be permitted or even considered so soon after the clear mandate for the UK was given. If the SNP are allowed to constantly re ask a question until they get the answer they want, there can be no stability. All pro UK political parties and the UK Government should explicitly rule out a second referendum for a generation.

**Pro UK Political parties should rule out further devolution**

Following the referendum all 3 of the main Pro UK political parties and the Greens and the SNP came together in the Smith Commission and agreed an extensive increase in powers for the Scottish Parliament. This should be the final settlement for the Scottish parliament. There can be no stability when every few years pro UK parties are suggesting and allowing for further powers to be devolved. This is undermining the UK parliament and if it continues it moves us closer to separation.

**Ban the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Government from interfering in reserved matters**

The Scottish Government should not be allowed to express an official position on any reserved matter, to do so undermines the UK Government. Whilst the Scottish Parliament is prohibited from passing legislation on reserved matters, it does pass motions beyond its remit, including when it has symbolically voted on Trident which is clearly a fully reserved matter.
Change the Civil Service Code to prohibit civil servants undermining the United Kingdom

The British civil service is paid for by the British Taxpayer. It is totally unacceptable that civil servants working under the SNP Government should ever carry out any action that undermines the United Kingdom or promotes separatism. The outrageous White Paper “Scotland’s Future” during the referendum was a gross misuse of civil servants time and resources, and it directly harmed the United Kingdom by taking the SNP’s claims and presenting them as facts and official Government policy. This must never be repeated and amending the civil service code can help prevent any conflict of interest or confusion. It should be an accepted principle that no British civil servant will ever act to undermine the unity of the United Kingdom.

Cooperation not competition between administrations and Legislative authorities in the United Kingdom

All the administrations and legislative authorities within the United Kingdom should be working together for the good of the British people, not competing and trying to undermine each other for political reasons. There should be a requirement for regular meetings to take place to better encourage cooperation and sharing of best practices. This should be at all levels of government to try to help foster better working relationships and less rivalry and hostility.

On promoting the United Kingdom:

Introduce a UK National Day to celebrate the United Kingdom

The United Kingdom is one of the only countries in the world without a national day to bring the nation together in unity. This is urgently needed and would be hugely popular. We recommend the UK Government rebrands the May Day Bank holiday as a UK national day. This would allow national events to be held to mark the occasion each year without the cost of having to introduce a new bank holiday. May 1st marks the anniversary of the Acts of Union coming into force, it is the birth of our United Kingdom, yet it gets no coverage and no national events. Introducing a national day of celebration would be very popular, and over 9000 have already signed our petition on the UK Parliament’s petitions website in support of such a day. [https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/104343](https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/104343)

Change the Flag Flying protocols to require the Union Flag to be flown every day

The current flag flying protocols published by the Department for Culture Media and Sport only encourage the Union Flag to be flown on small number of “designated days”. This should be changed to encourage the British flag to be flown every day by all Government buildings and public bodies across the United Kingdom. Ideally this would be a specific requirement, rather than just a recommendation by the Government. At the very least there should be a substantial increase in the number of designated days, including with days like May 1st added to mark the anniversary of the birth of the United Kingdom.

Expand current national events and create more to help strengthen British identity

There are already some occasions where people get the chance to celebrate being British or support the United Kingdom, but these need to be massively expanded. Current events like the Queen’s Official Birthday, the State opening of the British Parliament, Armed Forces Day and even cultural events like the BBC Last Night of the Proms should all be strengthened and promoted. More events to mark other occasions are also needed, like better honouring Trafalgar Day and celebrating other days of historic national importance.

The Government should defend the United Kingdom more

The UK Government and UK Parliament must do far more to make the case for the United Kingdom. More resources should be put into the Scotland Office and its top priority should be to counter the separatist
threat. A new Government Department or Government ministerial position should also be created and have overall responsibility for promoting the United Kingdom, countering separatism and ensuring all Government departments and policies are not undermining the integrity of the United Kingdom.

IN CONCLUSION

The current devolution settlement is not working, and the solution is not even more devolution. If the United Kingdom is to survive, it requires the UK Government and UK Parliament to take immediate steps to strengthen our country and counter the separatist threat that seeks to divide us. We believe implementing some of the above recommendations would have a positive impact and help keep our country united.

October 2015