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**LORDS AMENDMENT BREAKS
IN BREXIT NEGOTIATIONS**

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Britain's upper house backed an amendment designed to give Parliament the power to set the Government's future course on Brexit if it ends up rejecting any deal agreed by Theresa May later this year.

This means the Government would be effectively prevented from taking Britain out of the bloc without any deal at all - the so-called "no deal" scenario.

Labour's shadow Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer has already described it as "one of the most important amendments of the entire Brexit process".

Mrs May's Government has already indicated ministers will push back hard against the changes, which would need to be approved by the Commons before becoming law.



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Putting forward the amendment, Lord Hailsham said: “The Government’s policy is it’s going to be this agreement, or no agreement. That is not letting parliament have it’s say. The truth is if we want parliament to have a truly meaningful vote we have to insist on it.

“That is what this new clause is about.”

A total of 335 Lords backed the amendment while 244 voted against it.



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Mrs May’s spokesman said prior to the vote: “The withdrawal bill is about ensuring we leave the EU in a smooth and orderly manner.

Mrs May’s spokesman has criticised the move

“It is not a mechanism for overturning the referendum.

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"What this amendment would do is weaken the UK's hand in the Brexit negotiations by giving parliament unprecedented powers to instruct the government to do anything in regard to the negotiations, including trying to keep the UK in the EU indefinitely."

The Government does not have a majority in the unelected Lords, and the amendment attracted support from cross-benchers and opposition MPs.



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Labour's Keir Starmer called the amendment "one of the most important in the Brexit process"

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Brexit secretary David Davis

Mrs May's difficulties are compounded by the fact that she has a wafer-thin majority in the Commons and relies on support from Unionist MPs in Northern Ireland.

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This means it would only take a small Tory rebellion to throw a spanner in the works, especially as Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn has signalled his support for remaining in a customs union with the EU.

The government has committed to giving parliament a vote on the final deal, but has framed this as a choice of whether to accept the terms it has negotiated with Brussels or reject them and leave without a deal.

Brexit Secretary David Davis said prior to the vote: “The Government represents the country in international negotiations, not Parliament.”



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Brexit secretary said the Lords were “undermining the government’s ability to reach a good deal”

The Tory frontbencher added: “There is a clear distinction between the important work of revising legislation and attempting to overturn the referendum result to keep the UK inside the European Union, in direct opposition to the British people.”

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Speaking specifically about the amendment, he said: “At best it undermines the government’s ability to reach a good deal with the EU.

“At worst, it could reverse the British people’s decision and keep us in the EU.”

Lord Callanan, the Tory Brexit Minister in the House of Lords, added: “This flawed amendment seeks to tie our hands by inserting false deadlines and shifting the power to negotiate from Government to Parliament.

“It asks for meaningless votes on the deal before the deal is done. Those who want to overturn the referendum call this the ‘no Brexit’ amendment.”

Hours later Lords approved a second amendment, tabled by Lord Monks, which would require ministers to seek parliamentary approval for their phase two negotiating mandate, by 270 votes to 233.