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Three ideas that will not be in the Queen's Speech [1]

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I was on the Today programme on BBC Radio4 alongside Tom Papworth of Centre Forum. John Humphrys asked each of us to nominate three pieces of legislation we'd like to have seen in the Queen's Speech setting out the government's priorities for the year.

My first was a bill to allow all employees of small businesses to be registered as self-employed. This would create huge numbers of new jobs by lowering the non-wage costs borne by employers. It would also reduce the paperwork they have to cope with, freeing up time to drum up more business, and keeping prices down by lowering their costs.

Secondly I proposed a bill to set the income tax threshold at the minimum wage level for an average working week, making it so that no-one earning less than that would have to pay income tax. This would give the low-paid the so-called 'living wage' without it costing jobs by raising the costs to employers. It would indeed involve lost revenue, but there would also be supply side effects as work became more attractive and significant numbers moved off welfare and into work.

For my third point I called for hard drugs to be medicalized, meaning available to addicts at clinics run by doctors and nurses, and for recreational drugs to be legalized. I pointed out that the so-called 'war on drugs' was being lost, as it has been for half a century. The new proposal would take the crime out of drug use. I said I thought politicians would carry on doing more of what they knew did not work, but that more and more were admitting that a new approach was needed.

None of my proposals is in the actual Queen's Speech, but I am confident that at some stage in the future all of them will.

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