

Louise Ellman MP

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Thursday 13 December 2007

Business Questions - Science Research (Liverpool)

Mrs. Louise Ellman (Liverpool, Riverside) (Lab/Co-op): May we have a debate on the 20 per cent. Government cut in funding for science research and its impact on science departments at universities, including the one in Liverpool? It follows the merger of two science research councils, the Particle Physics and Astronomy Research Council and the Science and Technology Facilities Council. Surely a cut of 20 per cent. is not compatible with the Government's wish to support science.

Ms Harman: The Government are strongly committed to supporting science with investment in industry and also in educational institutions. I am not sure that the figures given by my hon. Friend accord with my understanding of the position. There has not been a cut of £80 million in spending on physics. One research council—the Science and Technology Facilities Council—has decided to reduce the amount of support available for particle physics and astronomy in universities, but is continuing to invest heavily in those disciplines in CERN and elsewhere. Our commitment to science has led to funding rising from £1.3 billion to £3.4 billion this year. I will ask my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Innovation, Universities and Skills to take into account the points my hon. Friend raises, and to write to her to clarify the position.

-ENDS-