matt.western.mp@parliament.uk

Dear Mr Western MP,

My name is                              and I am a student at the University of Warwick. I am writing to express my concerns over the proposed changes to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS). The proposal by Universities UK (UUK), first raised last November, would reduce some pensions by up to forty percent, and see the average lecturer lose as much as £200,000 in retirement. The pension scheme has already been downgraded in the last few years, and now it is under threat of further cuts. This is quite frankly unacceptable. The Universities and College Union (UCU) has pursued all options to try and resolve the issue, but UUK’s unwillingness to compromise has forced them to take strike action.

The overwhelming majority of UCU members, both at the university and across the country, have voted in favour of taking strike action, indicating the clear importance of the issue to the membership. Not only is this proposal directly damaging to our teachers, but also to the student body as a whole, who represent a considerable portion of your constituency, and to my education personally.

The staff of the university face the pension cuts as part of the wider marketization of education in this country. On top of the cuts they have also faced the widespread casualization of employment. This, as well as the increased fees that we as students are expected to pay, represent a threat to the future of higher education. I stand in solidarity with the UCU and want to fight to protect my education, and the education of my peers.

I urge you, Mr Western, to use your voice in government to advocate for the UCU against these heinous cuts. It would be an essential first step in the struggle to save our education. if indeed we are still a 'public' education system, that the scheme should now be guaranteed by the government to stop the pension becoming a pawn in the hand of the employers. I chose this university largely due to the exemplary standards of teaching provided, which has been put needlessly at risk by the proposed pension cuts. Please implore the university and UUK to return to the negotiating table with the UCU to end the dispute which is causing so much damage to myself, and those providing my education.

Yours sincerely,