



**Damian Hinds**  
*MP for East Hampshire*

First Published  
2 November 2010

## **Tough Choices**

Being still a relatively new MP in 2010 is truly the best of times, the worst of times. There is simply no job to compare to it for the chance, everyday, to try to make a difference. It is hard to describe the satisfaction from actually being able to help with a seemingly intractable problem.

But these rewards all come hand in hand with a genuine disappointment and sense of frustration when someone comes to a surgery with a problem I cannot help with, a situation I cannot help to fix.

Some of the legislation I have been able to lend my vote to as it passes through the Commons on its way to becoming law, like the Academies Bill, will play a big part in making our country a better place and change how parents engage with their children's education and I was proud to have a part in it.

But I have also tasted the comparative bitterness of the responsibility of hard decisions when the House gathered to hear the results of the comprehensive spending review recently.

Hard decisions had to be made, across every department and affecting every family. Changes to the benefit system, the amount of funds available and how they are allocated are going to bring, on occasion, real strain to every household.

No one comes into government or politics looking to take money away from someone, to offer less help than those who came before or to make life more difficult for a family.

I certainly did not. But all of us right now, regardless of party or position, have to be honest. Like any household that has lived past its means, we need to sit down, start with our income, add up the bills and admit we need to change our lifestyle – maybe cut up the credit card – to get things back on track.

It isn't enjoyable, and it can be a very hard readjustment, but it needs to be done. We are paying more than £120million per day in debt interest alone; this is an intolerable legacy to consider leaving to our children. We need to take real steps now, to make painful savings now, to safeguard the national inheritance for our children, things like the NHS, which can come under real threat if our national credit fails.

I may not like some of the things we have to do, I certainly am not happy about them but I am proud that this Parliament is acting, acting boldly and not a minute too soon nor a stroke too decisively.