19th November 2014 - Consumer Rights Bill

**Baroness Grey-Thompson (CB):** I support the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan. I have a number of interests in sport, which are declared on the register. We might be here a long time if I went through them all.

We have been discussing this for longer than I have been involved in sport—and that is at least 30 years. As an ex-athlete and a sports fan, of course I want people to be watching and supporting. It is important to say that this is not a ban on secondary tickets; it would not be so in practice. This is about those people who hide behind the lack of transparency to mislead or defraud.

We should not take lightly the number of governing bodies which are in agreement on this issue. Again, in the length of time I have been involved in sport, it is very unusual for so many to agree on a single issue. They believe in this because they feel that it is very harmful to what they are trying to do. This is a pragmatic step that empowers consumers. It will not inhibit the legitimate exchange of tickets on secondary platforms. It will just make government policy much more effective.

I would like to come back to the point of the noble Lord, Lord Borwick, on the Olympics and the Paralympics. It was briefly in the media about seats not being filled, but my understanding was that that was part of the contract with the IOC: it was IOC members who had to have those seats available if they wanted to watch the sport. It was not a case of tickets that had been sold and not used—it was a very specific area. Every Olympics and Paralympics Games have to set a number of those seats aside. I feel slightly embarrassed talking about that with the noble Lord, Lord Deighton, in the Chamber. He was much closer to it than I was.

With the Olympics and Paralympics, the legislation that was in place meant that people felt very confident, knowing that when they went to events they would get tickets. I have been to events where I have seen parents standing outside, explaining to their 10 year-old why the ticket they have is not valid. They might have paid over the odds for it, but the pressure from children to see One Direction and all those other people is huge. As a parent you might pay more, because you want to give that experience to your child. You do not spend lots of time checking out different methods of buying tickets on the internet; you buy the ticket because you want to be there. This is about protecting those people and making sure that they know that those seats are protected.

This is pragmatic. Nobody loses out from this proposal apart from those who seek to make huge profits by mis-selling or defrauding consumers. I strongly support the work that the noble Lord, Lord Moynihan, is doing in this area, because it is vital that we do this.