# Michael Gove receives peerage amid backlash over controversial legacy



Michael Gove, the former Conservative MP and Cabinet minister, has recently been awarded a peerage in Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's delayed resignation honours list. This decision has reignited discussions about Gove's controversial career and his legacy in British politics. Gove joins prominent figures such as Jeremy Hunt, Mel Stride, and James Cleverly, all of whom received knighthoods; however, Gove's appointment to the House of Lords has faced significant backlash from critics.

Accusations of "shameless cronyism" have emerged following the announcement, with critics labelling the honours as "rewards for failure." In particular, education unions have condemned the peerage awarded to Gove, who served as Education Secretary for four years and oversaw a radical transformation of the education system. Daniel Kebede, the General Secretary of the National Education Union, expressed that Gove's appointment is a "slap in the face" to those affected by his policies. He noted, “Michael Gove inflicted deep harm to our education system, and we are living with his legacy to this day,” highlighting issues such as deteriorating student mental health and a hostile environment for teachers under Gove's leadership.

During his nearly two-decade career in Parliament representing Surrey Heath, Gove held various senior positions, including as Housing Secretary, and played a crucial role in the Brexit campaign. Those close to him note his belief in the "transformative power of education." Pepe Di’Iasio, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, acknowledged Gove's controversial reputation as Education Secretary but admitted his commitment to high standards in education.

Gove's political journey has been marred by various public controversies. He faced significant criticism in 2022 for mimicking a Scouse accent while discussing the cost of living crisis, a move labelled inappropriate by Labour's Lisa Nandy, who remarked, “What is he doing!?” amid ongoing struggles faced by families.

His term as Education Secretary was notably marked by his contentious relationship with teachers and unions, which he derisively referred to as the "Blob." The phrase has been adopted within Conservative circles to denote various critics of government policy. Following his time in education, Gove's policies drew criticism for being divisive, particularly after he cancelled Labour's substantial school building programme shortly after taking office in 2010. This decision led to a legal dispute, with a judge deeming his actions "unfair" and instructing him to revisit his planning process.

Further controversies include his admissions regarding past drug use, where he acknowledged consuming cocaine over 20 years ago, alongside criticisms for having previously condemned middle-class drug users in a 1999 article. His actions in housing also came under scrutiny after he failed to meet pledges regarding "no-fault" evictions during his tenure as Housing Secretary, which has been cited as contributing to rising child homelessness in England.

Gove’s complicated relationship with colleagues was particularly evident during the Brexit campaign. He played a pivotal role in the Leave campaign while undermining Boris Johnson's aspirations during the leadership contest in 2016, which drew sharp rebukes from supporters of Johnson.

Moreover, Gove’s public persona has often been a subject of scrutiny, exemplified by his appearances on dance floors and his social media interactions, both of which have sometimes overshadowed his political contributions. In a viral moment in 2023, he was spotted dancing in a nightclub in Aberdeen, which many saw as a stark contrast to the serious responsibilities of his political career.

The challenges he faced throughout his political journey have compounded with allegations regarding the use of inappropriate language during speeches in his youth, adding layers to the narrative of his long-standing, yet polarising presence in UK politics. As he prepares to take up his peerage, the debate surrounding his legacy and the appropriateness of his rewards continues.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)