

**TRANSPARENCY OF LOBBYING, NON-PARTY CAMPAIGNING
AND TRADE UNION ADMINISTRATION BILL**

SUBMISSION TO THE COMMISSION ON CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT

23 OCTOBER 2013

The major strategic objective, that has already put forward in the Commons, should be to withdraw Part Two of the Bill in its entirety and re-table it after consideration by a joint committee of both Houses after the next election, in the light of experience garnered in the next election. Obviously this would require Government agreement.

If this is agreement not possible, I advocate focussing on a small number of key easily-understandable amendments that will command the widest support, such as shown below.

We of course realise that amendments will be tabled by peers without your knowledge, but are concerned that the more there are the greater the likelihood of supportive votes being split, and debating time being dissipated, rather than focused on the key issues. We would therefore discourage the Commission recommending/advocating support for any more than the bare minimum amendments, such as those below:

(The clause numbering for clauses 26 and 27 are unchanged between the Commons version of Lords version of the Bill.)

Clause 26 (political purposes primary purpose)

We think it is important to retain the Electoral Commission's support, but there is a suspicion that they have been too easily persuaded by the Government and that and we hope that the NCVO will try (and it will not be easy) to move them as far as they will go in our direction for a revised amendment.

Clause 27 (limits)

Amendment similar to that last proposed in the Commons, which seeks to leave it out/delete it.

A further possible amendment, already being discussed: time-limit to be reduced from the year before the election to only when the house is prorogued before the election. Happy though we would be at such a cutting back of the Political Party Elections and Referendums Act 2000 so that it only applies after prorogation, we think it unlikely since it constitutes a liberalising measure from the current position.

In conclusion we think focused, simple amendments on cl.26 and cl.27 are the way forward. We think we should go for Clause Stand Part on both, in the first instance. That would scupper the whole of Part 2, thereby retaining the status quo which pertained during the 2005 and 2010 elections - something the Government keep saying they want. NB Clause 28 imposes new constituency limits. They would fall if cl.26 fell.

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