

The Lobbying Bill is an attack on free trade unions

Designed to bash unions not regulate lobbyists



David Cameron's spin Doctor Linton Crosby and his relationship with the tobacco lobby

Topical Guides for GMB Members
GMB Yorkshire and North Derbyshire

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GMB position regarding Lobbying Bill press statement

GMB believe including unions in the Lobbying Bill is seeking to deflect attention from MPs and peers taking money.

GMB commented on the proposed Lobbying Bill. Paul Kenny, GMB General Secretary said “This is the height of hypocrisy when MPs and Peers get exposed for taking money from business that the Tories and Liberals seek to deflect attention by attacking trade unions and working people.

It would be a good idea that before Government starts lecturing trade unions and their members that they put their own house in order.”

Notes to editors

A Bill to create a statutory register of lobbyists is to be brought in before Parliament breaks for its summer recess next month, Downing Street announced today.

The announcement comes in the wake of a rash of lobbying scandals, which saw a Conservative MP and an Ulster Unionist peer resigning the party whip and two Labour peers suspended after it was alleged that they breached parliamentary rules.

The Bill creating a lobbyists register will also include measures to end self-certification of union membership and reform third-party contributions to election campaigns, said Prime Minister David Cameron's official spokesman.

Under the new proposals, unions will be required to carry out an annual audit of their membership and demonstrate that the figures they produce are accurate. The Certification Officer will be given the power to conduct investigations into the numbers produced, which are vital when ballots on strike action are conducted.

Unions appear to be the main target of the proposed changes to third-party election campaign funding, which will apply to organisations affiliated to political parties as those making major donations of more than £100,000.

The reforms will ensure that the true value of activities, such as leaflet-printing, is reflected when judging whether parties have breached the £19 million cap on campaign spending in the year before a general election, said No 10.

When calculating the campaign spending, organisations such as unions would have to include not only the cost of printing a leaflet but also overheads such as staffing and rent on premises - which could potentially inflate the figure considerably.

GMB Media Department.

The Tory Lobbying Bill is worse than a joke - it's an insult

There could hardly be a Bill more deliberately mis-named and more cynically drafted than the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill, published 4 days ago. It is riddled with more holes than a colander. It discriminatorily singles out trade unions for attack; even though they are clearly campaigning organisations, not an organisation that employs lobbyists.

It flourishes the extraordinary loophole that professional lobbying firms will be free to keep their clients secret, despite promising transparency in Whitehall, provided they limit their meetings to special advisers and mid-rank officials and will only have to reveal their clients if they meet ministers or permanent secretaries.

Another obvious flaw is that the new so-called lobbyists register will also exclude companies, e.g. those in financial public relations, whose lobbying activities constitutes only a small part of the business. Then there is the question of what lobbying means under the terms of the Bill, when it is clear that Lynton Crosby, the Tory Party's electoral guru and PM's adviser, has had conversations with Cameron about plain cigarette packaging when his firm, Crosby Textor, works for tobacco giant Philip Morris Ltd: yet that doesn't count as lobbying.

This is Tory camouflage to allow their lobbyists to carry on untroubled as before. Even though trade unions are irrelevant to the lobbying industry, this most viscerally partisan of governments could not resist having yet another swipe at them within the contours of a Bill that the

unions fall outside. The Bill prejudicially limits the amount trade unions and other registered 'third parties' can contribute directly to general election campaigns, reducing it by three-fifths from £988,000 to £390,000.

At the same time the Bill also proposes, equally irrelevantly to its main purpose, that unions will be forced to undergo annual audits on the size of their membership. There has been no public consultation on either measure, nor any previous suggestion that such measures should be included in a Bill clamping down on lobbying. Neither measure was included in the coalition's programme or the government's mid-term review.

This is a profoundly biased and jaundiced Bill which was deliberately introduced on the very last day before the parliamentary recess, in order to minimise any counter-attack. It makes a pretence of registering lobbyists while manifestly (and deliberately) failing to do so - rather in the same way that the government has introduced the general anti-tax abuse rule to show that it is cracking down on corporate tax avoidance, whilst limiting its reach only to a small fraction of tax avoidance.

The real objective of this nasty little Bill, whilst giving political cover to the Tories for allowing secret lobbying to continue unabated, is another blatant attempt to weaken and marginalise the unions and thus the Labour Party. Yet not a word about the £25bn a year the Tory Party get from hedge funds and the banks which makes them the biggest lobbyists of all.

Taken from Left Futures.

The View of the Political and Constitutional Reform Committee:
Lobbying Bill is seriously flawed and must be withdrawn.

Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee press release

The Political and Constitutional Reform Committee today publishes a report on the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill, ahead of the Bill's Committee stage on 9 to 11 September.

The report:

- Supports the aims of increasing transparency in lobbying and effectively and fairly regulating third-party campaigning, but states that the Government's Bill is "seriously flawed", because of inadequate consultation and a lack of pre-legislative scrutiny.
- Concludes that the definition of "consultant lobbying" is so narrow that not only would it exclude in-house lobbyists, which was the Government's intention, it would also exclude the vast majority of third-party lobbyists and particularly the larger organisations.
- Notes that many companies undertake lobbying as part of a wider communications and public relations business and they spend very little of their time meeting directly with Ministers and Permanent Secretaries, meaning they could argue they were exempt from registering.
- Urges the Government to expand the register to include in-house lobbyists and to cover the provision of advice on lobbying, as well as direct contact with Ministers and Permanent Secretaries.
- Recommends that Special Advisers and Senior Civil Servants be included in the list of people with whom contact counts as lobbying.
- Concludes that Part 2 of the Bill, on non-party campaigning, and particularly the definition of spending "for electoral purposes" is confusing and criticises the Government for leaving the interpretation of this phrase largely to the Electoral Commission.
- Concludes that the Government has not provided a satisfactory account of the basis on which the new levels for registration and limits on expenditure for third parties have been set.
- Urges the Government temporarily to withdraw the Bill and support a motion in the House to set up a special Committee to carry out pre-legislative scrutiny, using the text of the existing Bill as a draft. The Committee should be charged with producing an improved Bill within six months. The Bill should then be re-introduced to the House and complete its passage onto the statute book as soon as possible.

The Chair of the Committee, Graham Allen MP, said: “This Bill is an object lesson in how not to produce legislation. There was little or no consultation with those affected. There was no pre-legislative scrutiny. And the Bill is now being rushed through the House in a way that indicates a lack of respect for Parliament.

“We can all agree on the need for transparency about lobbying and effective regulation of third-party spending. But this Bill contains serious flaws. Above all, none of the measures will address the scandals that caused comment by the Prime Minister, the Coalition parties and above all the public, who will feel let down by this partial Government response. I recalled my Select Committee in the recess to fill the scrutiny gap as best we could and we have hurriedly produced this report. One of our recommendations is that pre-legislative scrutiny should be put into Parliament’s Standing Orders as a mandatory part of the law making process so this shoddy treatment of Parliament and citizens cannot be repeated.

“The definition of “consultant lobbyist” in Part 1 of the Bill is so narrow that very few, if any, lobbyists will have to register. The definition of third party spending “for electoral purposes” in Part 2 is currently unclear and will cause significant problems for the Electoral Commission in trying to interpret it.

“The new levels for registration with the Electoral Commission and the new limits on expenditure do not appear to be based on any evidence. For these reasons, the Government must withdraw the Bill and allow a Committee of the House to carry out proper scrutiny, with the aim of producing a better Bill for reintroduction within six months.”

Grand alliance of unions and lobbyists want Lords to kill Government Lobbying Bill

A unique alliance of trade unions, professional lobbyists and constitutional reform activists has been formed to pressurise the House of Lords into wrecking the Government’s “flawed” reforms of Britain’s lobbying industry.

The Lobbying Bill, piloted by Andrew Lansley, was passed by the Commons last week despite almost universal criticism outside Parliament describing it as a “dog’s breakfast”.

However the new alliance, called “1% is not enough”, which will formally launch this week, wants the Lords to recognise the “deep flaws” in the legislation that was supposed to honour David Cameron’s pre-election promise to put an end to lobbying scandals.

Despite last-minute efforts in the Commons to amend the awkwardly named “Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Unions Administration Bill”, the bill will now be scrutinised in the Lords before being passed back to the Commons at the end of this month.

A campaign to be launched on Monday by the TUC, the Association of Professional Political Consultants (APPC) and the Unlock Democracy political pressure group, wants charities; unions; private sector corporations; campaign organizations; accountants; law firms and other groups, to openly support a petition which attacks the lobbying Bill as an abject failure which would result in only one percent of all lobbying activity in the UK being registered.

The alliance’s “1 % is not enough” online petition wants to demonstrate to policy-makers the need for any statutory regime and register to include 100 percent of lobbyists in the UK.

Although the political activities of charities and trade unions have also been limited by the Bill - with many charities and voluntary sector groups saying it will have a “chilling effect” on their abilities to operate - the ‘1%’ alliance is targeting its campaigning efforts on the Lords. They want Parliament’s second chamber to effectively reject what the Commons backed and to demand an authoritative register for the UK’s £2bn lobbying industry is delivered.

Iain Anderson, Deputy Chair of the APPC, and head of the Cicero political consultancy, told The Independent ahead of the alliance’s launch: “It’s crucial that the Lords look afresh at this piece of legislation in a way that their colleagues in the Commons have not. Not a single amendment widening the scope of this bill to include all lobbyists was passed in the Commons.”

Chloe Smith, the former Cabinet Office minister, had been in charge of the Lobbying Bill prior to Mr Lansley taking charge just over three months ago. Neither of the two Conservative ministers consulted leading lobbying bosses or the industry itself during more than 18 months of claimed preparation. Ms Smith left the Government last week.

Mr Anderson added: “In order to be effective this Bill must ensure all professional lobbyists sign up to a new register, not a tiny minority as the Government envisage.”

The involvement of the TUC on the left, working alongside professional lobbyists generally regarded as right-leaning, demonstrates a consensus and unity on the damaging impact Lansley’s Bill holds.

Frances O’Grady, general secretary of the TUC, said: “We need more openness and debate about how we are governed. This bad Bill does the opposite; excluding most lobbyists and hobbling free speech. The government should withdraw it and start again, proceeding through consultation and consensus building to create rules that both work in practice and command wide support.”

The TUC also believe the bill doesn’t go far enough because it fails to enforce any legally robust declaration of which lobbyists meet and therefore lacks any claim to transparency.

Nigel Stanley, the TUC head of campaigns, said parts of the Bill simply read “Let’s have a go at the trade unions’ adding “It is tainted with party politics, has unnecessary regulatory burdens covered by what the TUC already does. Essentially it is legislation that should go the same way as Chloe Smith.”

Alexandra Runswick, director of Unlock Democracy, said the Bill was “One of the worst drafted pieces of legislation ever to have left Whitehall.”

She added: “The government is behaving recklessly by pushing forward with a Bill which would make lobbying in the UK less transparent. As it stands, to paraphrase the Prime Minister, “this Bill is the next big scandal waiting to happen.”

Jane Merrick of The Independent

Writes: not the country it once was

The latest figures show charitable donations falling as people have less disposable income to spend - and now the Lobbying Bill represents a new threat.

As part of my training for a half marathon next month, I completed 45 minutes of continuous hills yesterday. This is as miserable as it sounds - running up and down a hill, over and over again. It is physically exhausting but also mentally draining - you can't really enjoy yourself too much on the way down knowing you've got to climb up the same hill again minutes later. But, as I keep telling myself through the pain in my right knee, it is the best way to build up stamina for endurance running.

The training is tough, but not as much of an uphill struggle to raise money for charity for the event, the Royal Parks Half Marathon. My fundraising, for Save the Children, is slow. When I ran the London Marathon five years ago, the donations flooded in.

This anecdotal experience matches a national trend, showing that people are less likely to donate to charity than they were before the credit crunch in 2008. People have less disposable income. The latest figures show that, between 2011 and 2012, charitable donations fell by 20 per cent in real terms - a drop of £1.7bn - according to the Charities Aid Foundation. For smaller and medium-sized charities, the situation is bleak: they had a collective deficit of more than £300m in 2011, compared to £325m surplus in 2007. Now there is a new threat to the charities sector - being lumped together with lobbying organisations and finding their spending power is limited during election campaign periods.

The Lobbying Bill was supposed to create more transparency in the access that private firms have to power through a statutory register for lobbyists and for trade union funding to be more open. Yet despite the Prime Minister's commitment to the Big Society, which seems to fluctuate in its scale from one month to the next.

The Bill will also catch charities, smashed by the sledge-hammer that is the term “third party”.

So, for example, if the Joseph Rowntree Foundation wanted to raise awareness of poverty and set out to inform all the main political parties in the 12 months before an election, this would now be deemed lobbying activity. The amount of money a charity could spend in the election period would be cut from £989,000 to £390,000. A high-profile marketing and ad campaign would soon breach the limit.

Downing Street has shown some sign that it might redraft the legislation to protect charities, which is welcome. It is not, of course, the first time that the charities sector has had to fight to protect its interests - last year it successfully defeated an attempt by George Osborne to impose a charities tax that would have limited the amount an individual could donate to good causes before paying tax.

Both the charities tax plans and the Lobbying Bill suggest there is a default position inside Downing Street that does not consider the sector worth defending. For someone like David Cameron, whose leadership was built on the notion of civic society, this is odd indeed. When the former Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett raised the concerns of Oxfam, the Salvation Army and others at Prime Minister’s Questions yesterday, Mr Cameron ignored the charities issue and turned it into a jibe about Labour and the unions.

Yet is it good enough for charities to continue as they are? The answer is no. A large proportion of the public believes that charities, especially the largest ones, spend too much of our money on administration costs and overheads and not enough on the causes themselves. A survey by nfpSynergy earlier this year found that people believed that charities spend 36 per cent on administration. The actual figure is around 11 per cent. The gulf between perception and reality shows the PR battle that charities have to fight, but it is up to them to persuade us, the donating public, about the good work they are doing.

Part of this negative PR is linked to the high pay for charity chief executives - which the public sees as an administration cost, rather than a fundraising outlay.

There are 30 executives at 14 of the leading foreign aid charities that form the Disasters Emergency Committee who earn more than £100,000, and 192 who earn more than £60,000.

These include Sir Nick Young, on £184,000 as chief executive of the British Red Cross, and Justin Forsyth, who earns £163,000 as CEO of Save the Children. I know of someone who cancelled their direct debit of £10 a month to Save the Children to register her disgust at Mr Forsyth's salary, and there must be more who have done this. No wonder I am struggling to persuade people to donate to my half marathon effort - even though the money is going specifically to a maternity clinic in Liberia, and not on an executive in their head office.

There must be ways that charities can cut back on waste, but there is a counter-argument: that these organisations need the best available chief executives to drive fundraising, particularly at a time when people are donating less money to charity.

What is certain is that charities need to become more innovative at raising money - including using social media effectively - and get better at telling us what they are doing for good causes. Because if Downing Street and the public are sceptical about their good work, they really will feel like they're running uphill all day.

Last Chance Saloon for Lobbying Bill:

The coalition's plans for modernising the constitution have all foundered. The Lords have a last chance to get it right.

There is a certain irony that a prominent element of the coalition's stuttering constitutional agenda - the unreformed House of Lords - this week has the chance to give the kiss of life to another. The Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill, the legislation more familiarly known as the gagging Bill, was left unscathed by MPs in the Commons committee stage last month. In their defence, they only saw the Bill for the first time the day before the summer recess and began to debate it on their first full day back.

All the same, it is hard to understand the official support of Liberal Democrats, who had made transparency in lobbying a major demand in coalition negotiations.

Now all hope for significant reform of the bill rests with the peers; many of whom have close connections with charities whose activities are likely to be compromised by a bill that is a shameful travesty of what was needed to clean up British politics. The problem is, the Bill is so flawed, and it is hard to see how it can be easily amended. Instead, as both the Constitutional Affairs Committee and the newly formed Commission on Civil Society, chaired by the former bishop of Oxford, are suggesting it should be paused until it can be made fit for purpose.

This Bill is supposed to do two big things. The first is to tackle the unhealthy obscure network of connections between lobbyists, politicians and Whitehall officials. The Bill does not advance this objective by an inch. Campaigners say that as little as 1% of lobbying activity will be affected by it. The second ostensible aim is to restrict third-party campaigning in election periods. This may be a sensible contribution to a wider aim of taking money out of politics. However, the proposals are so vaguely drawn and generate such uncertainty that they are more likely to stifle non-party voices altogether. The triumphant result is that the drinks colossus Diageo, as an example, could go on meeting junior ministers and special advisers to argue against, say, minimum pricing for alcohol, while Alcohol Concern (annual income, less than £1m) would have to jump through a chilling series of hoops in order to take part in any kind of campaigning. They would also run the risk of criminal charges if they were found in breach of a law that the Electoral Commission says is so opaque, it cannot confidently predict how it will police it.

One by one, the coalition's ambitious plans for modernising the constitution, removing anachronisms such as the unelected House of Lords and promoting accountability and transparency into British political life, have foundered, skewered by the unrelenting defence of party advantage. The Lords has one last chance to get it right.

Latest News

The Bill will still damage the trade union movement

The government has agreed a five-week delay for consultation about its controversial Lobbying Bill, as it faced the prospect of defeat in the House of Lords.

Progressives are celebrating a pause in the government's Lobbying Bill - If only it were true.

What the government has done is simply change the order in which the Lords will debate the Bill. They have postponed part two - the section that has led to this being called the gagging Bill - until December.

In its place they have brought forward part three - which threatens the confidentiality of union membership records. This makes it far harder to lobby against, especially against a backdrop of premature victory celebrations.

Part three is as objectionable and partisan as part two. It requires unions to appoint assessors of their membership and opens up complaints about union membership systems to third parties. Unions are worried about opening up confidential membership data at both national and branch level:

- The Certification Officer (CO) - a state appointee - will be given new rights to investigate membership.
- Unions have to appoint an assurer from a state approved list.
- Investigators appointed after a complaint by the (CO) will have access to union membership records.

There are only a few days before the House of Lords considers the Committee stage of Part 3. The TUC has launched an urgent campaign to allow union members and anyone concerned about data privacy to adopt a peer and email them a personal appeal to protect union member privacy.

Ministers have struggled to explain why this section of the Bill is needed. They assure us that it has nothing to do with industrial action ballots - though that won't stop lawyers and bad employers trying.

Unions already have a strong self-interest in maintaining up to date records. If they don't, the courts will strike out any industrial action ballot. Existing law already puts a duty - enforceable by the CO - to maintain accurate membership systems. There have been no complaints since 2004, and only a trickle before that.

Labour shadow cabinet member Angela Eagle writes 11 November, 2013:

The House of Commons will today decide whether to give the government's sinister Gagging Bill a Third Reading and send it on to the House of Lords. Because the government want to secure their gag on charities and campaigners before the next election, Parliament will be making that decision with only three half days debate in committee and - incredibly for such a far-reaching Bill - with no pre-legislative scrutiny whatsoever.

This Bill was supposed to be about political reform. Before he was elected, David Cameron claimed that he was going to "take power away from the political elite and hand it to the man and woman on the street".

But what does this Bill do? Exactly the opposite. It protects vested interests lobbying while trying to stop ordinary people from having their say.

It says it all about who David Cameron really stands up for.

Just look at the Tory opposition to Ed Miliband's plan to freeze energy prices until 2017. This will save a typical household £120 and an average business £1,800 but the Tories are worried about upsetting their cosy consensus with the 'big six' energy firms.

According to one report this week, since the Coalition was formed, ministers at the Department for Energy and Climate Change have met with the Big Six five times more than they have met with consumer groups campaigning to help families with their energy bills. So it was no surprise that the government refused to back our amendments yesterday that would have forced real transparency for energy lobbyists.

David Cameron can try to pretend he wants to give political power to ordinary people, but - make no mistake - this Bill is about gagging them.

By dramatically restricting the activities of charities and campaigners in an election year, this Bill would have a chilling effect on the quality of our national debate. In seeking to slash spending limits, bring in unworkable new constituency rules, ratchet up the administrative burden on small charities and hold people back from issue-based campaigning, this Bill would have a long-lasting and damaging effect on our democracy.

I don't normally quote the Adam Smith Institute or the Taxpayers' Alliance, but they were spot on recently when they claimed the Bill "poses a significant threat to legitimate campaigning freedom of speech, political activism and informed public debate".

The government have been on a PR offensive to claim that their meagre amendments solve the problem. They don't. They barely scratch the surface.

The reality is that the government have put their fingers in their ears; they have refused to listen to the clamour from across civil society and are ploughing on regardless. Their gag is a deliberate and cynical attempt to insulate their record and policies from legitimate, democratic criticism in the run up to an election.

Unless they back Labour's proposals to improve this Bill or take it off the table altogether, Labour will be opposing the third reading this evening. And I hope the House of Lords will then give it the mauling it deserves.

Conclusions

The only conclusion is that this part has a hidden agenda to do with union affiliation to the Labour Party. You can imagine complaints after any contested selection.

Yet the state has never dared interfere in the internal affairs of political parties; it's not only Labour that has controversial selections. What is worse is that out of the 166 unions registered by the CO, only

15 affiliate to the Labour Party, yet all are to face this bureaucratic privacy threatening burden.

There is evidence that the blacklisting, run by construction companies, was fed information provided by parts of the state. This is why unions will not accept government assurances of confidentiality, especially when ministers have failed to explain why even on their own terms this part of this awful Bill is needed.

(Nigel Stanley, head of campaigns and communications at the TUC.)

The legislation means yet further state regulation of trade unions, which - as Tony Blair once boasted - suffer laws that are “the most restrictive in the Western world”. A Certification Officer will be imposed on them with access to their register of members’ names and details, including correspondence with the union. It is unclear for what purpose exactly, though: unions already have to present meticulously accurate membership records during industrial action, because employers can otherwise shut down strikes through the courts. One theory is that it will be used to cause havoc in internal Labour Party selections: a complaint from the Conservatives or Lib Dems about a candidate could trigger an inquiry from the Certification Officer about how they were selected.

What government has launched such a shameless assault on our democracy in recent times? Privately, Lib Dem MPs have talked of the need to prevent student organisations from tarnishing candidates, thus securing a Labour win: damning evidence that they want to shut down scrutiny of their many broken promises during their shabby term in office. Voltaire once acidly remarked that the Holy Roman Empire “was neither holy, nor Roman, nor an empire”; the Liberal Democrats have shown that they are neither liberal nor democrats. But our rights and freedoms were won through the struggle and sacrifice of our ancestors. It is not for us to allow them to be casually tossed to one side. This Bill - this brazen insult to democracy - must be defeated, crushed, obliterated. Time is running out!

(Owen Jones with the final word)

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Nigel Stanley TUC Labour List UNITE the Union Unison

Steve Bell The Guardian Huffington Post Angela Eagle

Mirror Group Dodd's 38 Degrees action.labour.org.uk

indexoncensorship.org services.parliament.uk New Statesman



Hope Not Hate poster



Appendix 1

Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill 2013-14

Type of Bill: Government Bill

Sponsors of the Bill:

Mr Andrew Lansley - Office of the Leader of the House of Commons

Lord Wallace of Saltaire - Cabinet Office

1st reading: House of Commons 17 July, 2013

2nd reading: House of Commons 3 September, 2013

Money resolution: House of Commons 3 September, 2013

Ways and Means resolution: House of Commons 3 September, 2013

Programme motion: House of Commons 3 September, 2013

Committee: 1st sitting: House of Commons 9 September, 2013

Committee: 2nd sitting: House of Commons 10 September, 2013

Committee: 3rd sitting: House of Commons 11 September, 2013

Programme motion (No. 2): House of Commons 8 October, 2013

Report: 1st sitting: House of Commons 8 October, 2013

Report: 2nd sitting: House of Commons 9 October, 2013

3rd reading: House of Commons 9 October, 2013

1st reading: House of Lords 9 October, 2013

2nd reading: House of Lords 22 October, 2013

Committee: 1st sitting: House of Lords 5 November, 2013

Committee stage: House of Lords 11 November, 2013

Committee stage: House of Lords 16 December, 2013

Committee stage: House of Lords 18 December, 2013

Appendix 2

Summary of the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill 2013-14

The Bill

- Introduces a statutory register of consultant lobbyists and establishes a Registrar to enforce the registration requirements.
- Regulates more closely election campaign spending by those not standing for election or registered as political parties.
- Strengthens the legal requirements placed on trade unions in relation to their obligation to keep their list of members up to date.

Latest progress - 11 November 2013

- Latest news on the Transparency of Lobbying, Non-Party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill 2013-14
- Line by line examination of the Bill took place during committee stage on 5 November.
- Amendments discussed covered clauses 1 to 7 of the Bill.
- Committee stage continues on 11 November when further amendments will be discussed.

Guidance notes for Acts of Parliament

When a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament?

Once a Bill has completed all the parliamentary stages in both Houses, it is ready to receive Royal Assent. This is when the Queen formally agrees to make the bill into an Act of Parliament (law).

There is no set time period between the conclusion of consideration of amendments and Royal Assent.

What happens at Royal Assent?

When Royal Assent has been given, an announcement is made in both Houses - by the Lord Speaker in the Lords and the Speaker in the Commons.

At prorogation (the formal end to a parliamentary session), Black Rod interrupts the proceedings of the Commons and summons MPs to the Lords chamber to hear the Lords commissioners announce Royal Assent for the bills passed towards the end of the session which had not received Royal Assent earlier in the year.

What happens after Royal Assent?

The legislation within the Bill may come into effect immediately, after a set period or only after a commencement order by a government minister.

A commencement order is designed to bring into force the whole or part of an Act of Parliament at a date later than the date of the Royal Assent.

If there is no commencement order, the Act will come into force from midnight at the start of the day of the Royal Assent.

The practical implementation of an Act is the responsibility of the appropriate government department, not Parliament.



38 Degrees fighting the UK gagging law