

For 2 pence a week we can Cut the Cr£p Out of Politics

An Open Letter for Sir Hayden Phillips Chair of The Review of the Funding of Political Parties

If you agree with the contents of this letter, please cut it out, sign, add your name and address, then post it to Sir Hayden Phillips at the address below. Many thanks.

You can also email your views to review@partyfundingreview.gsi.gov.uk.
More information is available at the website - www.haydenphillipsreview.org.uk

Sir Hayden Phillips
The Review of the Funding of Political Parties
5th Floor, Steel House
11 Tothill Street
London
SW1H 9LJ

Dear Sir Hayden,

I am pleased to learn that you have been appointed to gather consensus on a future system for the funding of political parties in the UK.

Thank you for asking for views from members of the public, as personally I am appalled by the frequent coverage of cash for favours and the undue influence wealthy backers and special interest groups apparently have on our governments.

Your review provides a welcome opportunity to address such concerns once and for all, which in turn may well attract more voters to the polling booths and more good people of high integrity into politics. What we do know with absolute certainty is that without reform, we can expect only more of the sorry decline we have observed. I urge you to seriously consider the following.

Just as votes are cast by individuals, donations should be restricted to individuals only. We each have one vote with which to wield influence. Additionally, we should each have one level of donation to political parties. This could be as little as 2 pence per week (£1 a year) from every eligible voter in the UK, creating an annual fund well in excess of £40 million which could be taken from the general taxation purse. How this would be divided up between the parties is bound to be the cause of much debate, but a debate well worth having in order to reach the best resolution. Count me in.

This is a chance for the UK to lead the world. To quote Abraham Lincoln, we could have a "government of the people, by the people, for the people" ... free from undue financial influence.

Imagine if we'd had more integrity in global politics over the last few decades. Would we be facing so many global issues in quite the way we are? The war in Iraq, resurrection of the nuclear power debate, the lack of urgent action on global warming delayed by the fossil fuel industry, millions of people unnecessarily addicted to prescription drugs, genetically modified food ... the list goes on and on. These issues would have been addressed far quicker and perhaps not even have existed if undue financial influence and the profit motive had been removed from politics far sooner.

The funding of political parties by those with special interests is also complemented by two other forms of undue influence; the lobbying and 'consultancy' systems. Lobbying of MP's should be documented, transparent and subject to balance. 'Consultancy' arrangements between MPs and interest groups should be outlawed.

Those who are elected by the people should not become beholden to a few rich financial backers and special interest groups, who expect payback on their investments either in the form of peerages, letters of favour, or even worse, legislation (or the lack of) to protect their financial interests.

Earlier this year The Times newspaper highlighted the problematic consequences of the current system: "The Times showed that organisations in the nuclear and pharmaceutical industries are funding and even writing policy reports in the name of all-party groups of MPs and peers". (Times, January 30th, 2006)

I hope your review will ensure that this is not the case, for the sake of all our futures.

X Yours sincerely,

A concerned individual

X Name:

X Address:



Cut it out

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