

At long last, libel reform

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[From the Guardian:](#)

Laws that led to London being dubbed "the libel capital of the world" will be reformed after peers in the Lords voted to pass the defamation bill, ending a three-year campaign led by Liberal Democrat peers Lord McNally and Lord Lester.

Libel reform campaigners said they were "delighted" overall that defamation reform was finally passing into law, although they were disappointed by the failure of a bid to bar private companies contracted to run schools, prisons or healthcare from suing ordinary citizens who criticised the work they do for the taxpayer.

However, the bill is a landmark piece of legislation and should provide more protection for individuals and organisations, including newspapers and broadcasters, which criticise big companies.

As a blogger, as a campaigner, as a believer in the importance of holding power to account and as a believer in the right of free speech I warmly applaud almost all of this measure.

But I deeply regret the Tory and Lib Dem move to protect the companies running privatised services.

No one should be reckless as a result of the passage of this bill. But it's vital that society can hold capital to account - and as far as I am concerned that is what this reform assists.