

Labour demands reform to the Lobbying Bill to protect f...

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It's good to note that Angela Eagles has, in behalf of the Labour Party, picked up the cudgel on the [Transparency of Lobbying, Non-party Campaigning and Trade Union Administration Bill](#) about which [I have been writing](#). As [the Guardian notes](#):

Eagle will deliver her warning at the University of East London where [Cameron said in February 2010](#) — three months before the general election — that Britain's lobbying industry was the "next big scandal" after the parliamentary expenses furore.

Eagle will say: "We agree that keeping the big money out of politics is key in bringing people back into it. The big money in politics today is spent by political parties not by charities and campaigning groups. Yet this bill looks to gag the latter, while doing nothing to curtail the former which spent 10 times more than all third parties put together in the run up to the last general election.

"No one supports this bill. It is a bad piece of legislation that will take our politics backwards. My message to David Cameron today is this: think again, rewrite this bill so it properly regulates the lobbying industry, doesn't attack the big society which you once championed, and takes the big money out of politics. If you do, we will back you and we can take a small step towards building the better politics we so urgently need to see."

I agree with that.

I am not opposed to a register of lobbyists.

If it is necessary to be registered I will be.

But to effectively clamp down on free speech, as this Bill does, is wholly unacceptable, most especially when the lobbying industry will be almost unaffected by it.