

Funding the Future

Dear Liz Truss, I'd love to believe you on the lobbying...

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I have just received the following letter from Liz Truss, who is my MP, [on the government's lobbying bill](#):

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your email about your concerns about part 2 of the Lobbying Bill.

The Register will capture professional consultant lobbyists. It does not cover in-house lobbyists as it is already clear on whose behalf they act. There are exclusions for representative groups, like the vast majority of trade organisations and charities. This is intended to make consultant lobbying more transparent — not act as a complete regulator of the industry. This means people will know on whose behalf lobbyists are working. Only campaigning by third parties that promotes or procures electoral success or otherwise enhances the standing of parties or candidates, would be regulated. So an organisation campaigning only on policy issues would continue to be exempt.

For example, the current law prohibits charities from engaging in party politics, party political campaigning, supporting political candidates or undertaking political activity unrelated to the charity's purposes. Charities will still be able to give support to specific policies advocated by political parties if it would help achieve their charitable purposes.

The Bill does not regulate attempts to engage with the policy of any political party; nor does it regulate having a view on any aspect of any policy of any party; nor any attempt to influence the policy of any party. This activity would only be captured if it was promoting the electoral success or otherwise enhancing the standing of parties or candidates. This is the same as under current legislation.

I have attached a letter that Chloe Smith MP sent to the campaigning group 38 degrees which address your concerns in further detail.

Best wishes,

Elizabeth Truss MP

Well, I have looked for the exemptions for representative groups in the law, and I can't find them. The only exception on this issue relates to Part 1 [of the Bill](#) - which is not the matter of concern to civil society, which is Part 2 of the Bill, so the claim made is totally misleading. And as for the suggestion that there is an exemption for policy issues the Bill makes quite clear lobbying on government policy is covered. So what then is not a government policy? Again, the claim made is misleading.

As a result I have written back to Liz Truss saying:

Dear Elizabeth

Thanks for your letter.

I have read this Bill in detail, and as you might know, am familiar with the ways in which legislation is written. Try as I might I cannot find the 'exclusions for representative groups, like the vast majority of trade organisations and charities' that you refer to. Can you point me to them?

Could you also define a 'policy issue' for me? Let me give you a couple of examples. I have campaigned for a General Anti-Tax Avoidance Principle to be included in UK law. I think that a policy issue, but if one looked at the issue in parliament the divide on the matter appears to follow political lines. The same might be said to be the case on country-by-country reporting, another issue on which I have campaigned where, until very recently, support appeared to come from only one side of the House until the Prime Minister suddenly decided to adopt the cause.

Are both matters in your view 'policy issues' despite the fact that politicians appear to have quite opposing views on them - which are subject to change? Or are they political? Could you please advise me. The future criminality of my behaviour (or not, as the case may be) may depend upon your opinion, to which I would wish to refer if others, such as the police, chose to disagree with you if this law is enacted. As such your opinion is important to me as I may need to rely upon it when preparing my defence from prosecution in the future.

Best regards

Richard Murphy

Director

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I wonder what response I will get?