

Politics in the UK should not be for sale

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I [posted this video on YouTube](#) this morning. In it I argue that whilst the first-past-the-post electoral system is a massive obstacle to democracy in the UK, but corporate donations are almost as significant. The time when corporate donors can buy power in the UK should be over, for good.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzmWQ3mmDYU>

The audio version is here:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=9e5vk-162c5de-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&font=Arial&skin=1&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a&size=315

This is the transcript:

Politics in the UK should not be for sale.

I would have thought that's glaringly obvious to anyone who believes in the democratic process and yet we all know that there is a massive influence on politics and politicians in the UK as a consequence of corporate donors - people who give their money because, let's be blunt about this, they want to influence the outcome of elections.

Why else would they do what they are? It's either that or they want contracts from government and either way the smell is rotten.

Now, I've talked often, including in videos in this series, on how we need to change the electoral system in the UK to have a proportional representation system to get rid of

the rotten first-past-the-post system, but at the same time we need to make sure that we get rid of the influence of companies on the system on politics in the UK.

Let me give you some simple examples in the forthcoming UK general election.

We know that Wes Streeting who wants to be the health secretary in a forthcoming Labour government has received significant donations from private health companies.

As, by the way, has Yvette Cooper, who wants to be Home Secretary.

As has also Keir Starmer, who wants to be the Prime Minister.

Are these acceptable? No, of course they're not.

And we know that in the past people like Boris Johnson got very large donations from some corporate sponsors.

This is not acceptable. I'm not saying it's the route to corruption. It could be but I don't know that. But it is the route to corrupting democracy because what this means is that those people who are able to direct these funds towards these politicians have undue influence on the outcome of the democratic process which should be determined by one person, one vote.

So I believe that it is time that any party that gets into power in the UK does two things.

First of all, it gets rid of the first-past-the-post electoral system and replaces it with a proper multi-constituency, in terms of current constituency size, single transferable vote, proportional representation system.

And secondly, it bans corporate donations.

How do we overcome the problem of funding political parties?

One, we actually limit the amount that they can spend on elections. Good ideas can travel quite simply. They do not need the expenditure of vast sums of money.

Secondly, we make sure that only individuals can donate. We cap the donations at a reasonable sum. £10, 000 would seem to be more than adequate to me.

And thirdly, we do provide state assistance to political parties and politicians who've stood before. What happens if we get a new candidate? They can make an application and a returning officer can make a decision as to how much they should be funded by based upon their likely electoral appeal.

And yes, that will bias against independent candidates, I know, because they tend not to get elected. But that's the way that outcomes are always going to happen in the UK.

My point is very simple though. We shouldn't be relying on corporations and any other system is bound to be better than the one we've got, and it will reduce corruption, it will produce better electoral outcomes, it will leave us with politicians free from corporate interests and we will therefore get better government.

That has to be the goal.