

# ANSWER MY QUESTION, PRIME MINISTER!

I'm John Boscawen. For the last week, the prime minister has chosen to attack me rather than answer my question of why she is defying the Human Rights Commission in ramming through the Electoral Finance Bill.

So I'll answer her. Then maybe she'll answer me.

I'm a member of Act, but I don't always toe the party line. I gave up being the party's fundraiser over 18 months ago.

As Helen Clark well knows, I support some of her Labour government's policies, including Kiwisaver (which Act does not).

But on the Electoral Finance Bill, I side squarely with Act, National, the Maori Party, the Law Society and – most importantly of all – the Human Rights Commission.

More on that in a minute.

First, the Greens and Labour seem to think it's important that I "confess" to being an associate member of the Business Roundtable.

I do so proudly.

I feel honoured to be able to debate the issues of the day with so many great New Zealand leaders, innovators, risk-takers – and job creators.

## I'm spending my own money

My campaign against the Electoral Finance Bill is nothing to do with the Business Roundtable.

I'd been an associate member for less than two months when I first made my submission on this bill, and I have sought and received no funding from the Business Roundtable whatsoever.

I should also tell you I've been a Rotarian for seven years, and a trustee of the Auckland Philharmonia Foundation for two years.

Above all, I'm a proud and passionate New Zealander. And I find it sad to see our own Human Rights Commission just totally ignored.

I've run a month-long radio and newspaper campaign against the Electoral Finance Bill.

I've been totally open and transparent about it.

I've now spent about \$180,000 on this campaign, of which \$40,000 has been donated by others.

Over \$5000 of that \$40,000 came from simply passing around the bucket at our two Auckland rallies, attended in total by over 7000 people.

(Incidentally, if I'd collected the \$5000 next year, it would have counted as an anonymous donation. I'd have had to forfeit it to the government.)

I appreciate the financial support I've had and thank all those who've helped me. Anyone else wanting to assist me may do so simply by posting a cheque to the Freedom of Speech Trust, Box 42-267, Orakei, Auckland.

## I'm defending the Human Rights Commission

I'm trying to create awareness of the bill's draconian provisions, and to highlight the opposition of the Human Rights Commission – which the government and, incredibly, the Greens and NZ First, continue to ignore.

I've never run a campaign like this, or spent anything like this, before in my life. However I don't believe you can put a price on democracy.

I believe the proposed Electoral Finance Bill strikes at the very heart of our democracy.

It makes campaigns like this illegal next year, and then one year in three after that.

The government does not want you to hear what the Human Rights Commission and I are saying. It does not want to be held to account in election year.

The Human Rights Commission wants you to be as informed as possible about the parties who seek your vote. The government wants to impose censorship, and stop other parties communicating with you.

## Helen Clark ignores the Human Rights Commission

Helen Clark brazenly said on Newstalk ZB on 19 November that "I think you will find that every issue that the Human Rights Commission raised has been addressed".

Utter nonsense.

It's true that the Human Rights Commission agrees with the broad aims of the bill – to promote greater transparency. So do I and many others.

But her government continues to defy the Commission on three vital points.

**Point one:** The Human Rights Commission called for the bill to be withdrawn. They foresaw that it was so badly flawed it would need too many changes.

Your government's response? Never mind human rights, never mind that the bill is unworkable, ram it through.

**Point two:** The Chief Commissioner said in her oral submission to the select committee on 18 October that "it is essential that any changes be subject to the widest possible public scrutiny".

Your government's response? To subject the changes to the narrowest possible public scrutiny by refusing the Commissioner's call for another round of public submissions.

**Point three:** The big one. The restriction that muzzles the government's critics for longer than in any similar democracy...

On 18 October, the Human Rights Commission said that it was "essential ... the present regulatory period [for election advertising] of 3 months is retained and not extended to a potential 11 months".

Your government's response? To ignore their own Human Rights Commission. Go with 11 months.

This, Kiwis, is your Prime Minister's idea of addressing every issue.

## I support Labour's donor's right to give \$500,000

My contribution of \$140,000 is less than a third of the \$500,000 that expatriate Owen Glenn gave to Labour before the 2005 election.

He was extremely generous and I support his right to be so. It is called democracy. Our parents and grandparents fought for it.

I think this week's attacks on me by Labour and the Greens treat the people of New Zealand with total contempt.

Surely they have a duty to the public of New Zealand to explain why they continue to ignore and defy their own Human Rights Commission.

If nothing else, surely they owe it at least to their own supporters to explain why.

## March to your computer now!

If you're a supporter of any of the parties supporting this bill (Labour, NZ First, the Greens and United Future), why don't you take just a few minutes and send them an email,

**Helen Clark:**  
pm@ministers.govt.nz

**Winston Peters:**  
wpeters@ministers.govt.nz

**Peter Dunne:**  
pdunne@ministers.govt.nz

**Jeanette Fitzsimons:**  
jeanette.fitzsimons@parliament.govt.nz

or **write to them all at Freepost, Parliament Buildings, Wellington.**

Simply ask why they continue to defy our Human Rights Commission.

If they don't answer your question properly, send them a second.

It's not illegal to ignore our Human Rights Commission. But if that's what they want to do, surely they should just own up, be honest and admit it – without having to attack me instead?

Even if you're not a supporter of any of these parties, why not march to your computer now and send them an email and tell them what you think.

Surely that's the least you can do to try to help protect our democracy?

**The Chief Human Rights Commissioner, former unionist Rosslyn Noonan, has been very strong and courageous. She has stood up to the government that appointed her. Let's show her we support her. It's still not too late for the government to withdraw this bill.**

*Authorised by John Boscawen, Box 42-267, Orakei, Auckland.  
john@boscawen.co.nz*

## One of the Silent Majority has her say

Members of the Labour Party, Green Party, New Zealand First and United Future,

I am not a member of the Act party.

I am not a member of the National party.

I am not a member of the Exclusive Brethren.

In fact I am not a member of anything, however, I guess you could call me one of the silent majority.

One of those swinging voters who takes seriously the issues and behaviours of politicians before deciding each election how to vote.

I can tell you now **I will never vote for any party who is so arrogant** that it thinks it knows better than the Human Rights Commission.

I will never vote for a party who is so arrogant that it can ignore the Law Society.

I will never vote for a party who denies me the right to speak out for one year in three – what next – no right to speak at all??

It is rubbish to expect us to believe that the reason for this bill is to stop groups like the Exclusive Brethren speaking out, when it is plain it is a poorly disguised excuse for the incumbent party/ies to deny others the liberty to speak out for what they believe.

It is rubbish to say that this bill will stop big money buying votes. After all it is **our money**, tax payers' money, big money, that you used to buy the votes at the last election by bribing students and poorer families.

Why should you be able to use **OUR** money, why should you be able to channel money, people and assets through the unions and not allow us to spend our own money to have our say?

What gives you the right to "screw the scrum" as you have been doing for years, but nobody else is allowed the same privilege?

The rest of us don't have the opportunity to pass retrospective legislation to get ourselves out of trouble.

Since when did the "law of common sense" and "discretion to not refer inconsequential cases" become part of law in this country?

This is just an example of hastily written and poorly drafted legislation being passed through without adequate consideration and consultation merely to feather your own nests.

It has nothing to do with the good of our country.

Our fathers fought for Democracy. You must not destroy our heritage. **DO NOT DENY US the RIGHT to SPEAK!!**

*Barbara Stewart  
Auckland*