

The Rt. Hon. Edward Miliband MP
Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition
The House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

10th November 2011

Dear Mr Miliband,

Yesterday the member for Stretford & Urmston, Kate Green MP, apologised to the House of Commons for misleading colleagues over her failure to declare an interest when proposing legislative changes. That failure related to her relationship with the GMB trade union, which provided her with thousands of pounds in her last election campaign. I welcome Ms. Green's apology to Parliament on this subject.

Ms. Green's statement to the House also made clear that the amendments to legislation she proposed were 'advised on' by the GMB trade union - whose members stood to benefit from the amendments she proposed to the Legal Aid Bill.

Today, my attention has been drawn to your document '*Refounding Labour to Win - Implementation guide for CLPs and Party stakeholders*'. This document gives a similar example of how unions can influence legislation in our Parliament on p. 12. It suggests that union influence was brought to bear on Rachel Reeves MP, now Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, to fight for changes to pensions.

- Ms. Reeves' campaign to change the Pensions Bill was backed by Unite the union through the 'Unions Together' organisation. Electoral Commission records show that Ms. Reeves' Constituency Labour Party received donations from Unite the union totalling £3,000 in the run-up to and during the 2010 general election campaign.
- Ms. Reeves registered donations from her Constituency Labour Party in the Register of Members' Financial Interests.
- However, Ms. Reeves did not declare these financial interests with her amendments to the Pensions Bill as required pursuant to Rule 78 of the House of Commons Code of Conduct.

The public must be made aware as to whether Ms. Reeves was indeed ‘advised’ by trade unions on her amendments to the legislation, one of which would have cost the taxpayer billions.

Obviously, in an open country like ours, with an active civil society, we support the right of individuals and groups to campaign to change our laws. There have been suggestions in the past that big donors to political parties have bought influence over policy. What seems clear now is that some of the largest donors to the Labour Party are receiving privileged influence over the legislation debated in our Parliament in return. Further, this privileged influence has been exercised without proper registrations and declarations of the financial interests being made.

It is now essential that you publish in full, a list of amendments or bills proposed by members of your Party in our Parliament that have been ‘advised on’ or otherwise assisted by donors to MP’s election campaigns, Constituency Labour Parties or the Labour Party nationally. The public need to know that donors to political parties cannot buy legislation in the mother of all parliaments.

I trust that you will comply with this request immediately.

I am making this letter public in the interest of transparency.

Yours sincerely,



The Rt. Hon. Baroness Warsi of Dewsbury
Office of the Conservative Party Co-Chairmen