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## Controversial electoral bill moves one step closer

Mon, 19 Nov 2007 05:04p.m.



The days of the National party relying on millions of dollars of money from anonymous donations

appear to be over.

The controversial electoral finance bill has been reported back from select committee and it severely limits how much parties can fundraise through anonymous donations.

There are also heavy restrictions on how much money outside groups can spend on influencing the election result.

It was the Exclusive Brethren's sneaky and secretive million dollar foray into trying to engineer a change of government last election - that is behind this major shake-up.

It backfired on Don Brash, who was caught having a memory lapse.

But now there will be a limit on what outside groups can spend and say in an election year - using such attack advertising.

The bill has prompted protests in the streets and now MPs scrutinising it have recommended changes, so;

Third parties, like the Brethren, can spend \$120,000 in an election year - that's up from \$60,000.

That will take effect from January 1st 2008; a three month period was considered and thrown out.

Non governmental organisations, NGOs, won't face restrictions - as long as ads stick to debating issues.



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All anonymous donors giving \$1000 or more must tell the electoral commission their name and address.

And those anonymous donations to parties will be capped to \$240,000 next election.

That will hurt National a lot more than Labour - National has channelled millions through secret trusts for years.

The Human Rights Commission bagged the bill initially as an assault on the freedom of speech.

It is happy with some of the changes, but not happy the public won't have a further say.

And the organiser of the weekend's protest remains annoyed.

Another protest is planned on parliament this Wednesday.

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