

MARCH FOR FREE SPEECH

It's election year under the Electoral Finance Act. If you're not careful, speaking out could get you arrested.

In steamrolling the act through, Parliament defied the Human Rights Commissioner on four main objections:

1. She said the original bill was "inherently flawed". She asked Parliament to start again. Parliament refused.

2. The Commissioner said any restrictions must be limited to three months before an election. Parliament ignored her and made it eleven months.

3. The Human Rights Commissioner and the Electoral Commission agreed that a fair ad campaign budget was \$250-300,000. Parliament cut it to \$120,000.

4. The Human Rights Commissioner said any changes to the bill must be exposed to the widest possible scrutiny. Not possible, said Parliament.

The Chief Human Rights Commissioner is Labour appointee and former trade unionist Rosslyn Noonan.

Joining her in opposing the Act are former Labour Prime Minister Mike Moore, the New Zealand Law Society, the New Zealand Herald and all our other major newspapers.

I invite you to show your support for the Human Rights Commissioner on a march this Sunday. Show our MPs that we're not prepared to have our rights to campaign against a government – any government – so greatly restricted.

After the march, speakers will include Auckland University law lecturer and constitutional law expert Bill Hodge.

Please email these leaders of the main parties that passed this law. Simply ask them why they ignored the Human Rights Commissioner.

Helen Clark:

pm@ministers.govt.nz

Winston Peters:

wpeters@ministers.govt.nz

Jeanette Fitzsimons:

jeanette.fitzsimons@parliament.govt.nz

Finally, don't let anyone mislead you that all of the Commissioner's concerns have been addressed. They haven't. But since the original bill was even worse, it's not surprising that she'd acknowledge that the changes go "some way" to addressing her concerns.

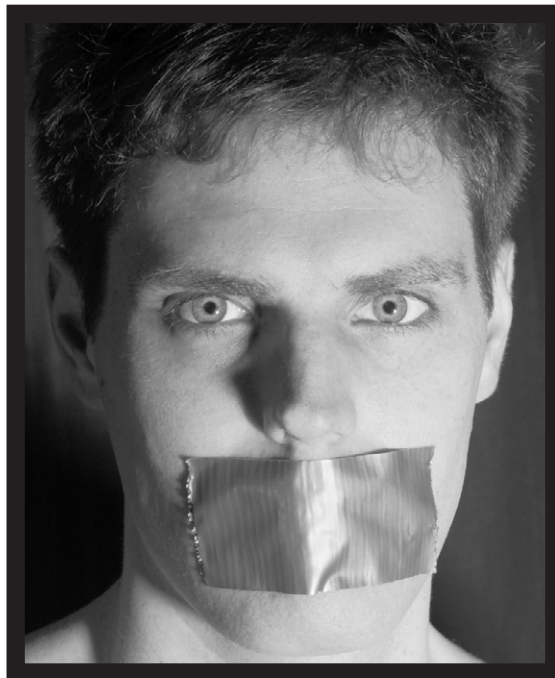
But nowhere near far enough. Under the new law, we're allowed to spend LESS THAN HALF of what the Electoral Commission and the Human Rights Commissioner said was fair.

And the restrictions apply for more than THREE times longer than the

Human Rights Commissioner said they should.

What we're left with is still the most repressive free speech muzzle in the Western world. If we don't stand up for our basic human rights now, what will happen next?

Meet outside Auckland Town Hall this Sunday at 2pm for our march down Queen St at 2.30pm.



QUIETLY

Join the **SILENT PROTEST MARCH THIS SUNDAY**
AFTERNOON 9 MARCH down Queen Street.