



Bribery Bill 'wash-up' Briefing

TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UK URGES THE SWIFT ENACTMENT OF THE BRIBERY BILL AS AMENDED IN PUBLIC BILL COMMITTEE IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Transparency International UK urges the swift enactment of the Bribery Bill as amended in Public Bill Committee in the House of Commons.

The Bribery Bill has been thoroughly debated and probed in both Houses. During any ‘wash-up’ process, TI-UK believes amendments that have not been accepted in either House should not be re-introduced and issues that have already been deliberated upon exhaustively should not be re-opened. TI-UK believes amendments that would weaken the Bill’s key provisions should be strongly resisted.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

TI-UK believes the Government’s Bribery Bill must now be enacted swiftly because:

- Current anti-bribery laws are ineffective and out-of-date. The laws date from 1889, 1906 and 1916. UK law enforcement needs a law that is fit for purpose in order to do its job properly.
- It will finally make the UK compliant with the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention.
- In the absence of a strong legal framework against bribery, UK businesses are more vulnerable to requests for bribes, adherence to high corporate standards is more difficult, and, according to the OECD Working Group on Bribery, they may suffer from increased due diligence costs incurred by business partners.
- The business community, extensively consulted by TI-UK and others, is strongly in favour of a new anti-bribery law. Bribery adds up to 10% to the cost of business transactions overseas. Effective anti-bribery legislation will create a level playing field for clean businesses. This is crucial if the UK is to remain competitive in the current economic climate.
- The UK’s international business reputation was severely harmed by the termination of the SFO’s investigation of the Al Yamamah Saudi defence deal, and the ill-explained ‘settlement’ of BAES’ prosecution in respect of many other international contracts. In the 2009 TI Corruption Perceptions Index, the UK’s score remained at an all-time low of 7.7 for the second year running. In 2006 it was 8.4.
- Bribery should not be tolerated either at home or abroad. It has real victims. It disproportionately affects the poor and is a persistent threat to development and democracy.
- By putting its own house in order, the UK is in a better position to encourage good governance in countries that receive UK aid. The UK will also be able to use its influence to encourage major emerging economies to stop their own companies paying bribes.

ABOUT TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL UK

We define corruption as ‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain’. Corruption hurts everyone whose life, livelihood or happiness depends on the integrity of people in a position of authority.

Transparency International UK is the UK Chapter of the world’s leading non-governmental anti-corruption organisation, Transparency International (TI). With more than 90 Chapters worldwide, and an international secretariat in Berlin, TI has unparalleled global understanding and influence. TI-UK:

- Raises awareness about corruption
- Advocates legal and regulatory reform at national and international levels
- Designs practical tools for institutions, individuals and companies wishing to combat corruption
- Acts as a leading centre of anti-corruption expertise in the UK.

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