



John Pagani



NAVIGATION

[Comments policy](#)[Contact](#)

Q

TAGS

[National \(38\)](#)[Economy \(28\)](#)[Tax \(24\)](#)[Labour \(19\)](#)[USA \(15\)](#)[Economics \(13\)](#)[Super Spending \(13\)](#)[B-Team \(12\)](#)[Aussies \(10\)](#)[Act \(8\)](#)[View all 79 tags](#)

ARCHIVE

[2011 \(537\)](#)[2010 \(54\)](#)

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[John Pagani](#)[← Back to blog](#)

## Anti-MMP money is used to advocate for stripping citizenship

There's an ugly strand turning up in right wing commentary. It advocates that anyone poor should be stripped of basic citizenship entitlements, including their right to vote.

And in New Zealand it's being paid for by anti-MMP campaign money.

Here's an [American Spectator](#) [columnist](#):

*Why are left-wing activist groups so keen on registering the poor to vote? Because they know the poor can be counted on to vote themselves more benefits by electing redish/ounionist politicians. Welfare recipients are particularly open to demagoguery and bribery.*

*Registering them to vote is like handing out burglary tools to criminals.*

I read this column via [Wonkette](#) but when I mentioned it to a friend, they pointed out it has been picked up by a right wing blogger [here](#):

*This is exactly the same situation here in NZ. With the Unions, Labour and the Greens actively running voter registration and then cajoling them to vote on election day. It is for precisely the above reasoning.*

and [Cactus Kate](#): [updated to add link that should have been in original]

*I've ever increasing amount of net beneficiaries who can just vote themselves an income. That is, the political party offering them the largest amount of money for doing very little. This is unjust to the many net taxpayers in New Zealand and fundamentally leads to flawed government*

What these bloggers have in common is commercial ties to the anti-MMP campaign.

**Both the bloggers I've linked to get money from the anti-MMP campaign and explicitly link their posts to the anti-MMP campaign.**

They are saying we need to get rid of democratic government because it enfranchises voters who need government.

The absurdity of what they're calling for is summarised by [this commenter](#):

*I work in a Government agency dealing on a daily basis with those criminals who are coming up for release - child molesters, rapists, murderers and druggies. I earn \$48,100. Yet according to you, I should not be allowed to vote because I don't earn enough and therefore have no right to any voice about the rich white man clubs who make our law & order policies?*

But they also advocate stripping citizenship from every beneficiary, every superannuitant, as well as any worker earning less than the average wage.

Selective disenfranchisement, demonisation of classes of people, and attacks on the fundamental rights of citizenship in a democracy need to be confronted, not ignored.

I know the posts seem fringe, but unless there is an outcry, especially from others on the right repudiating those hateful views, than the idea that it's ok to advocate for *stripping people of their citizenship* pretty soon takes hold, gets normalised. Just read their commenters to see the fertile ground for derangement.

There are a lot of pro-democracy people in the centre-right, and I hope they will recognise the implications of what's being said here and take a break from bashing the left for a minute to call it out. You dehumanise a group, then strip their citizenship rights...and then what happens? That's why it's important to confront these words immediately.

I have written a few columns pointing out my discomfitt with MMP. The ugliness of the anti-MMP campaign gives me pause over voting against the system, and the way they are using secret funding to advocate for stripping the vote is a bridge too far.

Posted 1 day ago by John Pagani [Like](#) [Tweet](#) 19

335 Views

15 responses

[Cactus Kate](#) responded: *about 20 hours ago*

Hilarious. I run a banner ad for the vote for change. campaign. Per month it's about a glass of champagne.

Saying I have commercial ties really is like saying David Farrar supports Greenpeace as his banner ads come up with their ads on occasion.

I can confirm I am not paid to post anything on my blog in terms of VFC and my opinion above was formed well before I even knew there was a referendum.

[Whaleoil](#) responded: *about 18 hours ago*

You really are a tinfoil hat wearer, aren't you?

In fact a more apt description is a hateful little socialist of the same ilk as Martyn Bradbury who have had a lifetime of being jealous, so much so it poisons their very out look on life.

Carrying an ad from someone does not in the real world prove "commercial ties". I'd run an ad from Greenpeace if they paid me enough, I'd run an ad for the Campaign for MMP likewise if they approached my advertising agent. I will quite simply take money from anyone to advertise on my blog. I am an equal opportunity capitalist.

Your sad little outlook where you see conspiracy everywhere says more about you than it does about me.

Why is it though that the first call of a socialist when confront with ideas they dislike is to call for the banning of their free speech.

Ideas are to be debated not hushed up.

[Cactus Kate](#) responded: *about 18 hours ago*

<http://asianinvasion2006.blogspot.com/2011/08/vote-for-change-advertisement.html>

I even went to the disclosure lengths of posting why I was carrying the ad John. Before going on and calling VFC pussys.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 18 hours ago*

I don't normally let through comments like this one, but I want to deal with a few points.

First, you have a relationship with the people running the MMP campaign that goes far beyond the banner ad.

Second, when you use terms like 'hateful little socialist' who has had a 'lifetime of being jealous' I think you cede the entire argument.

Third, stop bedwetting. I haven't called for banning your free speech. I didn't even call for ignoring it.

I believe in confronting it with argument. That's what I did.

See this is how free speech works: You say something, I point out you're wrong. You call me a hateful little socialist. I point out you are still wrong.

How it doesn't work is like this: You call for citizens to be stripped of their basic citizenship rights, and everyone shuts up and says nothing.

Complaining when someone disagrees with you is weak, whiny and wet.

Your first job, if you want to argue your point, is to defend the idea that people whom you wish to dehumanise should be barred from voting. If you want to argue that, then I'm happy to engage.

Argue all you want, but you need to stop sobbing about free speech when other people practice it.

I dispute the way that both you and Cathy have characterized your relationship with the MMP campaign. It's not just the presence of the banner ads; it's that you have both explicitly tied the anti MMP campaign to your posts advocating vote-stripping, in the very posts I linked to.

If you hadn't yourselves made that precise link I would ignore the banner ads. But you, not me, first linked your post to anti-MMP campaigns - I simply added that there is a commercial relationship.

The analogous position would be if I saw the Labour Party advertising on a racist website - I would expect them to pull their ads. I can't blame you for taking money. But I'm surprised that an anti-MMP campaign wants to associate itself with your advocacy of stripping people of the right to vote.

You said, "We need to seriously be looking at a system that encourages selfish voting behaviour to the detriment of the economy and the nation." See, you make a link with the anti-MMP campaign. And you get money from them. Plus you have organisational ties (I don't know whether Cathy has any).

That is not a conspiracy; this is an explicit link.

[Whaleoil](#) responded: *about 18 hours ago*

Oh you are such a card. You say you don't advocate the banning of free speech and yet he same indignant reply you say you don't normally let comments like that through...moderating, indeed banning comments you don't agree with.

You are still seeing conspiracies where there are not. Using your logic I could claim that there is a conspiracy of the left, unions, Labour and the Greens to silence critics of MMP to retain a system that they believe rewards them more than the right. They use useful media mouthpieces like you to justify their statements. They attempt to silence people like Cathy and me from having opinion. They and you don't want a debate, you want silence and a compliant electorate marching their way forward to more MMP.

It is no secret I don't like MMP, never have, in fact I am more of a fan of PV, but I am pragmatic enough and not wedded to electoral dogma to see that PV can't win a debate so skewed by the big money of the unions that SM is logically the only option.

Frankly I couldn't care less what the Vote For Change people think of my opinions, that is for them to sweat about not for you. But as is typical you believe that people should subscribe to your world view and only your world view.

I've got news for you John we live in a largely free world and no matter how much you rant and cry lw ill be having my say whether you like it or not.

[Cactus Kate](#) responded: *about 18 hours ago*

Once again John I have absolutely no organisational or otherwise ties with Vote for Change. I am neither a member, supporter or advocate of the group.

I run a fully disclosed ad for them on my blog. Oh and like a few hundred others clicked 'like' on their Facebook page.

Your argument is a poor one if everything I blog about is somehow associated back to VFC when they pay me less than the cost of a glass of champagne a month to run the ads.

Is TVNZ or the Herald responsible for every company they run advertising for? And vice versa?

The VFC frontchild Jordan Williams is supercilious little prick who acted like a second rate twit during the recent Brash ACT coup. If anything I shouldn't wish to be associated with them.

Yet they paid for an ad on my blog. So I accepted.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

Would you like some tissues?

I notice in your posts on this issue, you haven't even attempted to reference that you want to stop people from voting if they are likely to disagree with you precisely because they disagree with you, or might vote for something you don't want.

It's pretty hard for you to get on a high horse about your democratic rights after taking that position.

I don't let people abusing me, or abusing anyone else, on my blog, no. That's not banning free speech. It's because it's my blog, and it features things I'm interested in.

You can start your own blog by sending an email to [post@posterous.com](mailto:post@posterous.com), and bingo it will be posted. Say what you like there. Free speech does not include the free right to say what you want on my blog. It is the right to say what you want on your blog, and me to point out the idiocy or unpleasantness of what you say.

As for me being part of a pro-MMP conspiracy. That's pretty funny since I long ago wrote a highly public post about why I'm thinking of not voting for MMP: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/national/blogs/john-pagani-left-leaning/5116902/Why-I-...>

- and referenced my view in the post above.

The issue is your call for banning the right to vote. Stripping the rights of citizenship from people. To advocate for that, and then accuse me of banning free speech because I denounce your argument, is beyond ironic. It is so internally inconsistent it's bizarre.

And I notice you can't defend it.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

Previous reply was to Whale. This one to uh Kate.

The issue is that you linked MMP to your view that poor people should be stripped of their citizenship because they vote in a way you don't like.

As I said to Mr Slater, I can't really blame you for taking their money; I am surprised they want to associate their campaign with your opposition to basic democratic rights such as, know, the right to vote.

[Cactus Kate](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

According to current polls, these "poor" people actually like John Key. Or hate Labour so much. Surely you should be more worried about that as a Labour Party loudhailer than VFC!!

Democratic rights? My argument has always been that democracy was never intended to extend to what we have now - a situation where almost a majority and growing can vote themselves an income as they take more from the tax system than they give.

The great democratic slogan "No taxation without representation" surely has to apply in reverse for net taxation.

Anyway, I see your issue isn't with me, it is with VFC so given I have nothing to do with the organisation they can respond to that, if they bother.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

No my issue is with your call to strip rights of citizenship from people you disagree with.

Democracy and universe franchise was absolutely intended to allow the many to vote to redistribute money and power from the few. The absence of democracy is intended to prevent them doing it. There are no exceptions to this.

This is different to saying, 'the way those people vote is wrong.' You are saying that because they vote for something you don't want them to vote for they shouldn't be allowed to vote at all.

[kiwispmp](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

John, In parliament, or indeed in cabinet, if someone votes for something that puts money directly into their pockets or the pockets of companies or entities they have a beneficial interest in that is called a conflict of interest.

If you act with a conflict of interest the people like you cry corruption.

If you act in conflict whilst sitting on board of a company then you may find yourself prosecuted by authorities, jailed even. Just ask the directors of Nathans Finance.

Yet you think nothing of the conflict of being a net tax-taker, in fact a burden on the productive from have a similar vote, a vote in THEIR interests not the country's, nor the net tax-payers.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

And people like you wouldn't cry conflict of corruption in the case you give? A cabinet frequently votes for, say, tax changes that put a lot more money in the hands of cabinet ministers.

The argument you give is interesting: It is the precise case against universal franchise, which I suppose is what you are advocating.

The problem with it is it cuts all interests: It is true that people only vote self-interestedly, any decision-maker is going to act self interestedly. You can't get round the problem by removing the right to vote selfishly from one group, because the remaining group will vote for their interest at the expense of the disenfranchised. We have a lot of experience of non-democratic states to test this hypothesis - and guess what! That always happens.

[John Pagani](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

Just dumped about half a dozen comments - so to let you know, if your comment is to the effect that I am an idiot, or another commenter is an idiot, you need to start your own blog. It is very easy to do - just email [post@posterous.com](mailto:post@posterous.com) and the internet will start a blog for you, with the content of your email forming your first post. You're away.

The only comments I post are ones that I think are interesting or particularly relevant.

And I won't publish anonymous comments, unless they are riveting. To me.

[whaleoil](#) responded: *about 17 hours ago*

Using your "logic" John, columnists in the Sunday Star Times or the NZ Herald, like Nicky Hager, Matt McCarten and Anthony Hubbard, all decidedly left in their world view are now hopelessly compromised because those news papers accepted advertisements from the ACT party.

Likewise and the flipside of that assertion the ACT party would have to subscribe to the views of Nicky hager, Matt McCarten and Anthony Hubbard.

[Peter A](#) responded: *about 13 hours ago*

I don't see the same link you make in your headline John.

viz: **Anti-MMP money is used to advocate for stripping citizenship**

Er, no, not really.

Yeah, sure, both those self-styled VRWC blogs are carrying the *Vote For Change* banner ad', granted. I believe Cathy when she says she's paid peanuts and I don't see the *Vote For Change* dilettantes and their 'frontchild' (snort) pushing for a brave new world of reduced citizenship. Cathy might affect to do so, but I can't believe she's serious. More on that later.

Coincidentally, I recently asked both Cathy and Cameron whether they were paid advocates for the anti-MMP campaign. Yeah, I'm nosy. Their comments to you (above) are entirely consistent with what they told me: the commercial relationship is limited to running the ad. I believe that, and I'm fine with that. I'd have concerns if there was more to it, like blogging for cash, but, neh. Unlikely.

Let me put my cards on the table. I support proportional representation — my support was sparked by outrage at observing the malignant cronyism and unfairness of the FPP system. FPP disenfranchised not just minor parties but, through electoral boundary gerrymandering, and even saw the popular-vote-winning party denied the government benches in Rowling's case. That sucked.

Cameron (whaleoil) told me he's against MMP because "MMP is bad for National". Again, admirably up-front. We each get a vote.

Or do we?

Cactus Kate's appalling suggestion (*if she's serious*):

A cornerstone of democracy is no taxation without representation.

I am a believer in the cornerstone of neo-democracy in such a large welfare state that New Zealand now has is that **there should be no representation unless you pay net taxation**.

Regardless of whether this occurs in MMP, SM, FPP or STV.

... is laughably untenable.

That silly idea resembles votes for land-owners and slave-owners(!) ONLY, or for men only, or fudibly enough, the 'citizens' of Ancient Greece (which, you know, wasn't *everybody*.)

Her suggestion of limiting democratic representation to 'net taxpayers' or those earning more than \$50,000 pa, as you highlighted, is ludicrous. Real fringe stuff.

And Cathy's tongue-in-cheek

"No taxation without representation" surely has to apply in reverse for net taxation.

HAS to be a joke, or a tipsy dinner party conversation taken too far... not a serious suggestion.

What's next? Our hospitals can only be made use of by 'net taxpayers'? Roads? Schools? Police? Give me a break.

- Peter  
[www.ThePaepae.com](http://www.ThePaepae.com)

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