

Dear SLC

I understand you are asking for comments on the proposed new defamation law – so I am emailing because I have been concerned for some time that it is important to make sure that legitimate concerns about products and services can be expressed by journalists without running the risk of being personally sued by corporations who feel threatened by the truth, just as Simon Singh found himself being sued for pointing out that the lack of science behind the claims of the chiropractic industry.

To coin my own phrase, I believe journalists must be able to cry “snake oil” in a crowded room . . . or else we will sink back into a pre-enlightenment world

I understand from the libel reform campaign that the proposed bill goes some way to addressing these concerns – but there is still a question over whether the defence of public interest is too weak – and also a concern that corporations will still be able to sue.

I hope you will give some more thought to the bill in the light of these comments.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Wortley