

MR GRAY

BROADCASTING BILL - REQUIREMENT FOR POLITICAL MESSAGES

The proposals in the Home Secretary's paper seem reasonable as far as they go in the light of the persuasive case he makes.

However, they are perhaps less clear than they might be. Surely the objective should be to confine the requirements to terrestrial broadcasters - ie companies or organisations transmitting by "conventional" means with a public service obligation to the British public, or sections of it. This would presumably bring in commercial and local radio. It would exclude Sky TV, BSB and any other satellite developments.

The drafting of the Home Secretary's minute could imply that existing commercial radio might be excluded. They should surely be included, given their public service obligations.

In short, the basis for requiring the transmission of party political broadcasts seems less clearly defined than I would like. I would have thought it could be clarified on the basis either of terrestrial transmission and/or public service obligation.

I very much agree with the need to keep party political advertising off our screens.



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