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Nats have facts wrong on electoral law - CTU

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The Council of Trade Unions (CTU) is rejecting allegations it has breached electoral law.

Yesterday in Parliament, National's deputy leader Bill English said the CTU and other organisations were in breach of the Electoral Finance Act.

The CTU had failed to include the home address of its financial agent in its application to become a third party under the law, he said.

Registered third parties are allowed to spend more money during election year on political campaigning.

CTU president Helen Kelly said Mr English had got his facts wrong and her organisation had not broken any laws.

Ms Kelly said Mr English was confused by the requirements.

"I'm disappointed that he didn't take the time to ring and get a quick answer on this."

Mr English also accused another union - the Public Service Association - of a similar breach.

New Zealand First and Green billboards were also breaking the law, he said.

Mr English suggested the reason so many organisations that supported the Government's controversial Electoral Finance Act were breaking the law was because they considered it "absurd", or that "Labour and its mates" could break the law while everyone else had to obey it.

Justice Minister Annette King said she expected the Electoral Commission would look at any alleged breaches of the law and if Mr English had real concerns he could take them to the police.

She also wondered why Mr English did not bring up National leader John Key's promotional DVD, "that breaches every part of the Act".

Ms King accused Mr English of speaking "out of both sides of his mouth".

While he berated other parties in Parliament, National had taken a "sneaky" approach to electoral financing by getting anonymous donations before Christmas so it would not have to account for them.

The new electoral finance laws came into effect on January 1.

The Government introduced the new laws saying these were needed to counter third party campaigning, like that done by the Exclusive Brethren in support of National ahead of the last election, and large donations hidden in secret trusts.

Opponents say the new laws are an attack on free speech.

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