



MEDIA RELEASE

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PM Attempting to Shut Down Referendum Debate

Family First NZ is annoyed with comments by the Prime Minister John Key that he will ignore the results of the upcoming anti-smacking Referendum and will not be allowing Families Commissioner Christine Rankin to enter the debate.

“The Referendum is an expensive exercise made necessary because of a failure by politicians to listen to the voters,” says Bob McCoskrie, National Director of Family First NZ. “It is hypocritical of politicians to criticize the cost when their own actions have led to this public outcry.”

“John Key is undermining the process by suggesting that, while he will ‘listen to the public’, any law change will be subject to what he thinks.”

“It is especially ironic because while he was the leader of the Opposition he said

The Labour Government has shown utter contempt for New Zealanders and the democratic process with its plan to railroad the anti-smacking bill through Parliament. The Labour-led Government knows the measure is deeply unpopular, so it plans to act against the wishes of the majority of Kiwis and ram the bill through under urgency. This is a deeply cynical abuse of power as Labour tries to clear the decks of this controversial issue. Helen Clark has refused to let her MPs vote the way they really think on this bill. To ram it through under the cover of urgency shows just how out of touch her government has become.”

Family First has provided the evidence he has set as the benchmark for changing the law – that is, evidence of good families being prosecuted in court under the anti-smacking law.

“It is also completely unacceptable that he is attempting to shut down debate by preventing Christine Rankin from being part of the debate. It appears that the government has adopted an attitude of ‘agree with us or don’t speak’.”

“This suggests that the new government is following down the road of the previous government - which ultimately led to its downfall - of ignoring the voice of NZ’ers and shutting down debate,” says Mr McCoskrie.

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