

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committees  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Subject: Submission regarding the Australian Capital Territory (Self-Government)  
Amendment (Disallowance and Amendment Power of the Commonwealth) Bill 2010

Dear Committee Secretary

The Territories have democratically-elected parliaments, and should be allowed to govern themselves. The present arrangement whereby a Minister not elected by the voters of a territory can overrule the decisions of the democratically elected representatives of a territory is untenable and redolent of the so called guided democracy regimes that Australia so much decries elsewhere in the world.

The Australian Government overruled the electors of the Australian Capital Territory to impose self-government. It should now accept the logical outcome of that decision and allow the citizens of the ACT to have genuine self government and not some half way house that subjects it to the political whims of people who are not accountable to its electors. Accountable government is the basis of democracy. It is about time the Australian Parliament allowed the citizens of the ACT full exercise of their democratic rights.

The current bill, while not ideal, is a step in the right direction. Requiring a majority vote in both houses of federal parliament before any override of a territory law can occur would make it harder to overturn ACT or NT laws than is currently the case.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Bates