

Wednesday, 9th March 2011

Committee Secretary
Legal and Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

I believe that all Australians should have a fair say. The Australian Capital Territory should have the ability to set legislations without being over-ridden by the Federal Parliament. This will be moving Australia forward by creating equality in people's say throughout the nation.

The Australian Capital Territory currently only has two Senators whereas all of the states of Australia have twelve. This is unfair. By moving into the Australian Capital Territory from a state in Australia, people reduce their power as part of the Australian community. As we are the Capital Territory, we should be setting an example for the rest of Australia instead of being treated like puppets. I believe that by living in the ACT our voices should be heard and be equal to those of people living in the states of Australia.

Australia is seen as a democracy in the eyes of other countries. So why are people's opinions being treated differently depending on where they live in Australia? I believe all Australians should be treated equally. Democracy means for the people, by the people. All the people should have the same say. If you live in a territory not a state you have less of a say because of having less senators. Two people are not able to get all of the opinions of all 333,667 people living in the Australian Capital Territory, as of census 2006. In Canberra we have less of a say than in the states. We as locals have local problems that the Federal Parliament should not have to worry about looking after. With local representatives, and more of them, we would be able to get our local laws and legislations without the rest of Australia telling us what we should be doing about our problems. They might have solutions but their solutions won't necessarily benefit us in the ways we want them to.

The state of Tasmania has almost the same size population as the Australian Capital Territory. Though Tasmania only has a very slightly larger population, it is represented by twelve senators. This gives Tasmania a lot more power in the Senate than the territories have. When the rules were made of how many senators there were to be representing each state and territory, the territories were administered directly by the Federal Parliament. This is why the territories have fewer senators. One of the biggest differences though is that Tasmania has the right to pass local legislations without the Federal Parliament intervening. I believe that the ACT should have the same right.

For all Australians to have an equal voice in the Senate, we should have equal representation.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms Micaela Ferrington

Ms Kayla Smurthwaite