

Senate Committee – Legal

Dear Senators

I would like to make a comment in regard to Senator Bob Brown's Bill seeking to amend the Minister's power of veto over laws passed by the ACT Legislative Assembly.

I am a resident of the ACT, and very strongly SUPPORT Senator Brown's bill. I believe media misrepresentation of the consequences of this bill has been extraordinary and in a way constitutes a form of the popular interstate sport of 'Canberra bashing'.

What our democratically elected members of the ACT Legislative Assembly choose to legislate for or against is not the issue, and the level of hysteria about whether we will legislate to legalise gay marriage (which I fear may be in part because the proposer of the bill is himself open about his sexuality) is a sad reflection of a belief I would have hoped had long since disappeared from our society.

I hold it as self-evident that a democratically elected body governing a certain population has the right to make laws on behalf of the community which voted for it. This is the crux of the issue, and morally and ethically, no other opinion could be held.

It is an anathema that a single person has the power to override this unalienable Australian right and impose their personal view, or the view of the branch of the political party which happens to hold power Federally, upon the citizens of that community. This constitutes at best an oligarchy or at worst a dictatorship. In addition, it should be recognised that the matter concerns the citizens of Canberra, as citizens, and not the role of the city as the National Capital, a role which of course should remain the sole prerogative of the Federal Parliament.

Of course, and despite wide reporting implying the contrary, under the proposed changes the Federal Parliament retains ultimate power over legislation as it does in other jurisdictions.

I strongly urge you to vote in favour of the Bill.

Yours sincerely
Linda Steadman
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