

Submission

While it is appropriate to prohibit speech which defames, harasses or incites violence, it is *not* appropriate to outlaw speech which mocks, offends or insults. The ability to offend is integral to freedom of speech in a vibrant, democratic society in which people hold robust and differing opinions. A law which prohibits the giving of offence is oppressive of free speech and consequently harmful to freedom and democracy. A Government which suppresses free speech, including the ability to offend, is a Government which suppresses opinion, public discourse, and the free exchange of ideas.

A law which prohibits the giving of offence goes far beyond protecting people from discrimination. If such a law were enacted it would be a retrograde step.

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