



THE SENATE

LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

Note from committee secretariat

Approximately 43 submissions were received that were identical or substantially similar to the attached form letter.

The committee therefore agreed to publish one example of this form letter, along with a cover note setting out the approximate number of submissions received.

Dear Committee Members,

Please find below my submission regarding the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018.

I was very disheartened to see this bill introduced into parliament just before the end of the sitting year. This perhaps explains the sloppy drafting of the bill which targets all 'religious bodies' for removal of rights when the outline of the explanatory memorandum makes it clear that only religious schools are meant to be targeted!

This means that the bill's provisions will affect other religious bodies that contain an education element such as Churches, religious charitable organisations, university campus ministries etc, and so the effect of this bill, if passed, would curtail freedoms far more widely than even the authors intended.

But even if the bill was amended to just relate to religious schools, the effect of this bill over time will be enormous – effectively driving Christian schools out of existence by preventing them distinguishing themselves through policing their educational environment in accordance with Christian doctrine. This bill is therefore really a bill to destroy the whole faith-based school system.

Furthermore, there no need for this bill to positively protect rights at all, because parents who don't want a religious education for their children already have many more non-religious schools to choose from; and so it is only the rights of religious parents that will be negatively infringed.

Therefore I urge the committee to resist this attack on private faith-based schools and parental choice. Please point out to MPs in your report that schools and parents are the only ones who should have the right to dictate the educational environment of their children, not the government.

Yours sincerely,