

Committee Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
P O Box 6100
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary

I write to make a short submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee's inquiry into the Commonwealth Electoral Amendment (Donation Reform and Other Measures) Bill 2020.

In my view there is no need for the proposed consequential amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 and I do not support the amendments.

There is already a funding and disclosure system in place under the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918. While transparency is important the amendments proposed in the Bill are excessively harsh and severe and would place impossible reporting requirements for many of the compliance measures.

The proposal for donors and recipients to disclose trigger gifts within seven (7) days after the gift is made and requiring subsequent gifts that are not permitted anonymous donation or gifts of \$100 or less (post-trigger gifts) to be disclosed within seven (7) until the end of the reporting period is just one example of excessively harsh and impossible to adhere too measures.

It is my understanding that both candidates and federally registered political parties are currently required to lodge financial disclosure returns with the Australian Electoral Commission. Donors also have to declare donations if they are above the disclosure threshold and disclose all gifts.

Registered political parties are audited annually already and financial disclosures are regularly examined and audited by the Australian Electoral Commission. The returns of the registered political parties also also posted on the Australian Electoral Commission website.

There is no doubt that the consequential amendments while placing almost impossible reporting requirements will not be able to be conducted without additional resources for the Australian Electoral Commission and I dispute the financial impact statement stating “that it is anticipated that any additional expenditure required of the AEC could be met within existing appropriations. “

The Bill in its current form proposing consequential amendments to the Commonwealth Electoral Act 1918 should not be passed and the current funding and financial disclosure system should be retained.

Yours sincerely

Robyn Nolan