

Senate Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600.



Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012

I would like to point out some disturbing features of the above named bill.

Reversal of Onus of Proof: It is simply not possible to prove you didn't do something under certain circumstances. How can anyone home alone prove that they weren't out doing some criminal activity? A reversal of onus of proof brings fear upon people and is not natural justice. Courts of law have always had to prove their case. And all people accused of doing something wrong should be allowed to have legal representation. Otherwise they stand to lose financially, reputation, and job position.

This idea to make it illegal to offend someone at work on the basis of their religious belief or political opinion is nothing more or less than a licence to set up someone you don't like to get rid of them from their job.

People will set up situations to cause grief. The best example of this was when some Muslim converts deliberately entered a Christian building complex in Victoria knowing what was going to be discussed. They then pretended that they were offended by what was said, even though they didn't have the foggiest of what their holy book said and put in a complaint to the Anti-discrimination people. It took years of heartache and hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal costs to be resolved. No one wants to see the courts burdened with spurious cases.

This Bill will encourage more of this type of setting people up to bring the justice system against them for their own harm. How is it possible in large workplace circumstances to know if somebody is going to be offended by something somebody else said? If the word "sorry" is said at the first sign of offence, that should be the end of the matter. Some people these days are always looking for money compensation payouts.

When it comes to making it illegal for church-based retirement villages and nursing homes to discriminate on sexual orientation or gender identity grounds, does the government want to move churches out of this community involvement? Old people who have lived their lives believing that certain types of behaviour are not wholesome should be able to choose a retirement facility that agrees with their beliefs. (They want to be at peace with their conscience.)

It is like the tip of the iceberg. If that was allowed, then schools would have to employ openly "alternative" teachers and the matter would then progress to pedophile teachers being given every opportunity to groom children. The law must be consistent. This bill just starts a slippery slope.

How could this federal legislation be applied in the states? In Queensland in November this year a loophole in the Anti-Discrimination Act was closed. Prostitutes can no longer hire a motel room and turn it into a brothel. This protects the integrity of the motel business owner. Owners have to have control over the activities on their property because otherwise they stand to lose financially.

Why do we need these restrictive new laws? The vocal minor minorities with the help of mass media get to discriminate over the large silent majority of people who just want to get on with their lives. This Bill is a radical bill for social change and does not make relationships in the workplace or community better. Please give us only good laws.

Mrs M Cottrell

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