

20th December 2012

The Senate ***Legal and Constitutional Affairs Committee***

Dear Committee Secretary,

Should the Human Rights and Anti-Discrimination Bill 2012 pass into law as it currently stands, then Australians will not have the right to freedom of opinion and expression as expressed by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

We will be on par with totalitarian regimes like China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Burma and Yemen who severely censor freedom of opinion and expression.

Inserting political and religious opinions as new grounds of discrimination is not only wrong, but dangerous for our Democracy.

If freedom of opinion means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear.

It is therefore imperative that the words "***political opinion***" and "***religion***" be removed from section 17, Division 2 the Protected Attributes (1)(k) and (1)(o) clause.

The words "***other conduct that offends, insults or intimidates the other person***" should also be removed from section 19, Division 2 Meaning of Discrimination (2)(b).

As for reversing the onus of proof, meaning anyone who is accused of "discrimination" will have to prove they're not guilty is a massive attack on our rights and the right to be presumed innocent. The onus of proof should always be on the person making the accusation not the defendant.

These new laws, should they pass as they are currently drafted, will do nothing but weaken the liberties of all Australians.

This committee should instead be legislating an addition to our own Constitution similar to that embraced within the Constitution of the United States of America:

Parliament shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Yours sincerely

Roy Ford