

As a concerned Australian citizen, I support the bill to ban Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) provisions in free trade agreements. This includes the Trans Pacific Partnership Agreement and the Korea-Australia Free Trade Agreement currently being negotiated by the government on my behalf. As a citizen I have nothing to gain from these provisions but overseas corporations do. Even John Howard said no to ISDS provisions in the US-Australia Free Trade Agreement because they are a threat to national sovereignty. That is, the right to rule and regulate for the benefit of Australian citizens first and not overseas interests. Currently Philip Morris is trying to overturn our plain packaging laws through an agreement we have with Hong Kong because the free trade agreement we currently have with the USA does not include these provisions. However, after the TPPA is signed and if it contains ISDS provisions, it will give other major industries the right to sue Australian governments over laws and regulations that do not favour them over Australian citizens. For example in Australia we have the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) which gives Australians access to affordable medicines. The large pharmaceutical companies in the USA would like to challenge this scheme and potentially make medicines more expensive as this scheme impacts their profits. The loss of the PBS in its current form will impact at risk groups. For example those from low socio economic backgrounds, our Indigenous and women. This will lead to adverse health outcomes and will impact other areas such as employment, crime and education. We want to be a smart and working population, not one majorly divided into the haves and the have nots.

Thank you for your consideration