

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal and Constitutional Committee  
Department of the Senate  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

30 October 2005

Dear Secretary

**Submission in relation to Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005 (Cth)**

We refer to the Anti-Terrorism Bill 2005, a draft of which was posted on ACT Chief Minister John Stanhope's website. The Freedom Socialist Party understands that your Committee will be inquiring into this Bill and tender this letter as a submission to the Committee's inquiry.

First, we condemn the lack of time allowed for meaningful debate of the Bill. If carried, this Bill would make huge changes to Australian law. To attempt to ram the Bill through with almost no chance for public scrutiny shows contempt for the Australian people.

We think the Bill should be *rejected in its totality*. It will certainly do nothing to enhance the safety of the Australian community. In fact, it will do the opposite. The proposed control orders, which will allow house detention and 24 hours surveillance of people who have committed no crime, will simply increase the already high level of community outrage over the current direction being taken by the Howard Government.

The Bill has many dangers. It would permit severe restrictions of freedom without the need for any proof. It would also give the police unprecedented powers without proper scrutiny. Under our *existing* laws, the police are not sufficiently accountable. This country has a long history of Aboriginal people, immigrants and those with mental illnesses being shot and killed by police officers who get away with their actions. Rather than making police less accountable, we advocate the establishment of elected civilian community review boards with powers to hold the police to account.

We are very alarmed that this Bill will allow Australians to be targeted for their religious and political beliefs. For example, we have previously argued in our newspaper that the Iraqi people have a right to resist the occupation of their country by the U.S. and its allies. This draft legislation seeks to criminalise those who publicly put this and other views.

We believe that the Federal Government is going down the very dangerous path of removing people's civil liberties, such as the right to free speech, association, dissent and protest,.

It is not possible to build safeguards into this legislation which is fundamentally flawed and unnecessary. We urge the committee to reject this Bill in total. It is a dangerous law which will threaten the security of minority groups and ultimately has a chilling effect on all dissent and erodes the civil liberties of every Australian.

Yours sincerely

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Debbie Brennan, for Radical Women

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