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Senate Education and Employment Committees□
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Sent by email to: eec.sen@aph.gov.au

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Submission to ‘Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2017’

GetUp is an independent, people-powered movement of over one million Australians. The conditions at work impact our lives, our families, and our wellbeing as a society. Therefore, a fair workplace is a significant part of our vision of a fair, flourishing and just Australia.

As such, GetUp is deeply concerned that the ‘Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2017’ (the Bill) forms part of an across-the-board effort by the Federal Government to constrain, contract and control the voice of civil society.

We believe that this across-the-board effort to diminish the capacity of civil society voices to stand up for the millions of Australians we collectively represent amounts to an attack on the fundamental tenants of Australian democracy.

The new controls and requirements placed by the Bill on unions are much broader and more restrictive than the comparable controls and requirements placed on corporations.

These controls and restrictions include: the grounds for dismissing a union leader, the magnitude of penalties for improper conduct, the ability to force the closure of a union, and the ability to force the mergers of unions.

We believe the sum effect of these controls and requirements will be to diminish the capacity of the trade union movement to advocate for the rights and working conditions of their members and the workers they represent.

At a time of rising inequality and flat wages growth, we believe the eventual effect of these changes will be to make these problems facing working people even worse, to the benefit of corporations already experiencing significant profit increases.

And we are deeply concerned that this may be precisely the Federal Government's intention in introducing the Bill.

On these grounds, GetUp urges the Senate to reject the Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Paul Oosting
GetUp National Director