

To the members of the Senate:

I write to object to the proposals contained in the above Bill.

The Attorney-General's review of the original multiple pieces of human rights legislation has become an opportunity to increase the range and operation of the original Acts.

I refer particularly to

a) extension of applicable discrimination which the legislation prohibits (or penalises) to include political opinion (which undermines the balance and nexus between freedom of political speech and opinion on the one hand and parliamentary privilege on the other), and religious opinion expressed at work (why is religious opinion considered objectionable in workplaces?)

b) extension of the nature of discrimination to include feelings associated with insult etc., going into areas where objectivity becomes impossible, thereby making for massive increases in workload for Commissioners, the Board and Courts in assessing highly subjective material possibly generated in hotly debated topic areas

c) reversal of the onus of proof, which makes abuse of process much more convenient for a vexatious complainant, and defence against such a claim much more difficult for an aggrieved respondent - particularly when coupled with the provisions in various places for anonymity of the complainant

d) restriction or partial removal of the exemptions for various bodies such as churches by confining the exemption protection to only direct beliefs practices and teachings, rather than the present status where application of such beliefs opinions etc to other areas of welfare, charity, education and health for example is also exempted.

I request that these objections be taken into consideration when the Bill is before the relevant Committee of the Senate, and that the Bill be therefore rejected.

Yours faithfully
John M Angelico