

LIBERAL PARTY OF AUSTRALIA

Federal Director

24 February 2016

Mr David Coleman MP
Chair
Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters
Parliament House
Canberra ACT

Dear Mr Coleman

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission on the *Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016*.

The Liberal Party of Australia welcomes the Australian Government's legislation to reform important aspects of the method by which Senators are elected.

The Liberal Party notes the report by JSCEM following the 2013 Federal election, which found it desirable to reform electoral procedures through the abolition of group voting tickets, thereby empowering individual voters to decide their own preferences for themselves.

The current arrangements have led to undesirable practices, including 'gaming' of the system and preference 'harvesting', details of which were documented in the Committee's previous report.

The Liberal Party's submission at the time noted that:

"In recent elections it has become clear that the current electoral arrangements have loopholes which are being exploited to distort the intent of Australian voters through complex and hidden preference deals ..."

In his forward to the final report the then Chair of the JSCEM Hon Tony Smith MP noted:

"While such 'gaming' of the system is legal, it has nonetheless distorted the will of voters, made Senate voting convoluted and confusing and corroded the integrity of our electoral system."

The Government's proposed amendments will address this very serious deficiency and the Liberal Party of Australia supports and respectfully commends the changes to the Committee.

Yours sincerely