



## LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

### **Note from committee secretariat**

Approximately 458 submissions were received by the committee in bulk packs containing a mix of five types of form letters, which were identical or substantially similar to the attached five form letters.

The committee therefore agreed to publish one example of each form letter, along with a cover note setting out the approximate total of submissions received.

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600  
13<sup>th</sup> January, 2018



**Thus says the LORD of hosts, Render true judgments, show kindness and mercy to one another, do not oppress ... and let none of you devise evil against another in his heart. Zechariah 7:9–10**

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: THE AMENDMENTS TO THE SDA PROPOSED BY SENATOR PENNY WONG

Ordinary Christians in Australia, and there are millions of us, are deeply concerned that the amendments recommended by Senator Penny Wong may be used to do exactly this – oppress and devise evil against us. We are opposed to opportunities which may be loop-holes that could be manipulated to oppress the church in any way, including legally and financially. We are deeply concerned that laws intended to protect a few will in reality be used to oppress many.

We wish you to give us all a fair go, which is a basic principle that the whole of Australia has been built on for centuries. When people submitted their opinion on the same sex marriage survey in 2017, they acted on trust in their leaders. Bill Shorten promised the people of Australia, ‘I and Labor will not support legislation which impinges upon religious freedom in this country.’ Malcolm Turnbull promised, “As strongly as I believe in same sex marriage, even more strongly, if you like, do I believe in religious freedom.”<sup>1</sup> I urge you to make laws which encourage trust in politicians.

We want the SDA to be free from any type of amendment which may be used to oppress Christians in Australia in any way whatsoever – in their churches, teaching institutions or ancillary organisations. Steve Smith suffered public humiliation for ball tampering because it went directly against the Australian ethic of giving everyone a fair go. Let not the Australian Government be involved in law tampering.

Millions of Christians in Australia are deeply opposed to any type of infringement on their right to regulate the practice of their Christian faith according to the Bible and their right to speak on everything that the Bible says. Our message is ‘No tampering with our freedoms.’

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted from The Australian, mid-September, 2017

Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee  
Department of the Senate  
PO Box 6100  
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January 2019

To All Committee Members

**RE: the amendments to the SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT proposed by Senator Penny Wong**

We are worried that the proposed amendments will have a far broader impact than they claims, covering religious education and training by religious institutions. It has the potential to make churches, synagogues and mosques subject to costly and painful litigations just because they uphold the practice of the doctrines of their faith.

As a voter, I am very upset to see the direction that this amendment bill is taking, a direction which seriously intrudes in the practice of religion. Australians were promised, prior to the postal vote on same sex marriage, that there would be no adverse consequences to redefining marriage.

Yet, hostility towards religion is now blatantly demonstrated by activists. Rather than complying with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in relation to the protection of religious freedom, politicians are trying to make an opening to undermine religious freedom.

Religious schools have made it clear that students are not expelled on the basis of their sexuality. However they still need the right to govern the way in which students behave in their institutions if such behaviour clearly undermines their religious teachings. These same religious schools have also made it clear that the current exemptions, however clumsy, are the ONLY protection they have to run their institutions in line with their respective faiths.

Just like any political party, the Defence Force, and the Police Force we all have the right to discern, to differentiate, in selecting suitable candidates. Would the Government insist that the Labor Party employ staff who are supporters of the Liberal Party??

I and many of my friends send our children and grandchildren to religious schools for our own reasons. Any restriction which is intended to hinder the open and free expression of that religion is a betrayal of the Government's own promises.

The latest Australian census indicates that about 70% of Australians identify with a particular religion. Australian soldiers have fought and died in wars to achieve this freedom. It would take much disdain of our great tradition for politicians to ruin it.

I **strongly object** to the proposed amendment bill and request that the existing exemptions to the Sex Discrimination Act **be maintained** that afford at least some protection for religious freedom.

**Freedom of religion is vitally important to us and we want specific legislation to be made as soon as possible to protect this right.**

11<sup>th</sup> January, 2019  
Committee Secretary  
Senate Legal & Constitutional Affairs Legislation Committee  
PO Box 6100  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

RE: AMENDMENTS TO THE SEX DISCRIMINATION ACT PROPOSED BY SENATOR PENNY WONG

I write as a Christian who tries to love Christ the way He loves us all. The only tangible way that I know His love is through the Bible. I therefore am bound to try to obey His word. All references quoted below are from the Bible. I am bound to warn you of the error that would be made if you passed this bill against God's word.<sup>1</sup>

- No person is favoured by God over any other person.<sup>2</sup> So, I must oppose any law that gives favour to any one person over another in the church.
- The Bible tells people that God will give up to their ways those who engage in behaviour like homosexuality.<sup>3</sup> Those people who help homosexuals engage in their behaviour are assisting them to be given up to their ways by God. Ezekiel warns that I would be held guilty if I failed to warn them. I must oppose any bill that favours this behaviour in God's system of education.
- It is Jesus' plan that everyone who hears His word condemns himself. This is followed by repentance, restoration & healing.<sup>4</sup> When condemned behaviour is sanctioned by government laws, the flow of God's plan of good for everyone is affected.
- The Bible tells me not to judge others.<sup>5</sup> In obeying this requirement I cannot accept the label of bigot or homophobe. These names have been used to lay blame for the high rate of suicides of those who believe that their sexuality is other than their biological sex. If I accept this blame and approve of the bill, then I will be making it more difficult for these people to learn the truth about God's word through their suffering.<sup>6</sup>

The initiation oath of each new parliamentarian acknowledges the help of God. This help is found in His Bible.

Please do not amend the S.D.A & preserve freedom of speech & religion in new Acts as soon as possible.

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<sup>1</sup> But if you warn the righteous person not to sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he took warning, and you will have delivered your soul. Ezekiel 3:21

<sup>2</sup> For there is no partiality with God. Romans 2:11

<sup>3</sup> Therefore, God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their own bodies among themselves. They turned the truth of God into a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Romans 1: 24

<sup>4</sup> Israel's king David committed adultery & killed the woman's husband. David was totally condemned. But upon repenting and accepting the punishment of losing a son he went on to be Israel's greatest king & ancestor of Jesus. 2 Samuel 11 & 12

<sup>5</sup> Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Luke 6:37

<sup>6</sup> And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. 1 Peter 5:10

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12<sup>th</sup> January, 2019

**Love never gives up on people. It never stops trusting, never loses hope, and never quits. Freely you have received; freely give.<sup>1</sup>**

Dear Committee Secretary,

I am deeply concerned about the long-term implications of the amendments to the SDA proposed by Senator Penny Wong, because they rely on the premise that love can be forced by law. Love, by its very nature, is something which is freely given.

It appears that what Senator Penny Wong is urging is that churches and religious institutions give their homosexual students compulsory love, not true love which is freely given. I am deeply concerned that the long-term effects on homosexual students who, knowing that love is given under compulsion, will not learn to trust that people who love them are genuine. This will create in them a foundation of insecurity and suspicion. How will they ever be able to trust that anyone is offering them genuine love, or be able to offer genuine love in return, not having understood what they have experienced in the institution? This might affect their whole lives.

There appears to be no record that students have been rejected from a religious teaching institution since the SDA was passed into law. If love is merely a social construct, then relationships are only for self-gratification. Genuine love is what God offers us, as God needs nothing from us. What God expects all Christians to offer to other people is genuine love freely given. He has given and continues to give vastly and unstintingly to us.

Surely, in an educational institution, teaching trust, love and giving must be the basic platform for all knowledge. Let our young people experience genuine love, freely given, and develop genuine trust rather than suspicion, based on doubt that everything shown them is feigned or forced, not honest and true.

Yours sincerely,

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Corinthians 13:7; Mat 10:8

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Dear Committee Secretary,

Millions of Christians in Australia are deeply concerned that the amendments to the SDA put forward by Senator Penny Wong will result in restrictions to the freedom of Christians to practise their faith according to the Bible and the freedom to speak from the Bible, across all their churches and institutions. We are concerned that these amendments are the thickening edge of the wedge, and once passed, will open the way for more to follow.

We want to be completely free to adhere to the Bible in what we teach and what we expect of student conduct, without the threat of prohibitively and destructively expensive litigation.

The Constitution of Australia has the words ‘under the blessing of Almighty God’ in its opening phrases. The Constitution therefore implicitly protects Australian Christians from restrictions to the way we follow God in the Bible. We do not want any of the amendments put forward by Penny Wong to be added to the SDA. We urgently require specific legislation protecting religious freedom in Australia.

Millions of Christians oppose any infringement on their rights whatsoever. I am one of them.

Yours sincerely,