

15th August 2008

Senate Education, Employment and Workplace Relations Committee
Department of the Senate

Submission to Senate Inquiry into Academic Freedom

I believe that there is prejudice in my high school curriculum towards a left-of-centre world view. Postmodernism, anti-Americanism, pro-socialist and unionist views are common themes from reading material in English, history and geography classes. It does not bother me that those sorts of views are put forward, but they tend to dominate and there seems to be little balance.

I have also experienced instances of explicit political bias.

The most vivid example occurred after my Legal Studies teacher saw me working on Polling Day in my Liberal T-Shirt.

Although I knew (and respected) that my teacher voted Labor, I thought that he would have the mutual respect and maturity to not let his views affect how the class was conducted.

I certainly did not expect my classes to be filled with Labor Propaganda and the constant reminder of the November 24 defeat of the Coalition.

One day, after setting up for a Legal Studies lesson I turned to the blackboard to see a note which read: "Interest Rates have increased too many times too fast in Howard's term as Prime Minister. However, due to Kevin Rudd's strategic economic management the economy has stabilised."

This was accompanied by the teacher's verbal comment "Brendan this fact is for you!"

My objections to this are:

- The note on the blackboard, at best was opinion. However, it was not presented as such, hence the comment of "fact."
- The comment was not relevant to legal studies. I believe the teacher misused the class to push his ideological agenda instead of teaching legal studies.
- The personal verbal comment demonstrated a bias which is completely inappropriate and unfairly targeted me for my support of the Liberal Party.

If this material is to be published, I would like my name and the name of my school not to be published. Thank you.

