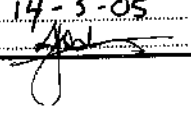


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**SUBMISSION NO. 81**

**Miskin, Sarah (REPS)**

**From:** Arnold Ward [arnold1@chariot.net.au]  
**Sent:** Monday, 14 March 2005 12:24 PM  
**To:** Committee, EM (REPS)  
**Subject:** Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters	
Submission No.	81
Date Received	14-3-05
Secretary	

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14 March 2005

Joint Standing Committee on Electoral Matters  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600

**Submission: the Conduct of the 2004 Federal Election and Matters Related Thereto**

In past elections I have never been comfortable with the voting procedures for the Senate. Presumably the intention is that voters will choose the candidates that they would prefer to be elected to the Senate.

Using the 'above the line' method voting, by putting a '1' in the box, a voter accepts the distribution of preferences by the Party that receives the '1' in its box. It is certainly a very convenient, and easy way out, for those voters who are not that concerned with what actually happens to their vote. Parliamentarians are often expressing their concern over the lack of interest, and knowledge, about political affairs and to allow this method of allocating preferences is to accept that those concerns do not have any great standing in reality.

Under the current method political parties are given the opportunity to use undemocratic methods in deciding how to direct their preferences, and note the words THEIR PREFERENCES. A lot of backroom dealing goes on and the voter is virtually irrelevant when this process occurs. As Antony Green stated after the last election – "The deals that produced the Senate outcome have shown that the group ticket voting system used is starting to distort rather than reflect the will of the electorate".

In a democratic process of voting, however, a voter should display an interest in the candidates and what they stand for, and also their party's stand except in the case of an independent who is standing.

In my own case I will not allow any political party to determine how my Senate preferences flow and will always number each box. Having said that I am concerned that I am forced to vote for a candidate or candidates that I would not want to see elected. In my view the Senate electoral process should allow an optional/preferential method thus enabling a voter to go as far as he/she wants to in selecting potential candidates for the Senators in his/her State.

If optional/preferential voting is adopted every voter will have a real say in the decision as to which individuals are selected for the Senate. And what could be more democratic than that?

Submitted by

15/03/2005

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Page 2 of 4

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