

Dear Senators.

I write to present my opposition to the Higher Education Support Amendment (Abolition of Compulsory Up-front Union Fees) Bill 2005. This Bill is nothing less than an ideological attack by the Federal Government, and will have no beneficial impact on students or University life. With this Bill the Government will single handedly remove all forms of direct representation for students.

Akin to other reforms by the Government, this Bill attacks the security and wellbeing of the some of the most vulnerable members of our society. As a student at Flinders University and a Director of the, I am overwhelmingly proud of the advocacy and academic rights offered free of charge as a result of a student services fee. Supporters of this Bill have a weak and porous argument that not all students benefit from this service. Just as only a small percentage of the population access the criminal justice system, society as a whole benefit from the system. The academic rights afforded to all students are a direct result of the work of advocates and academic rights officers at the University.

The food and beverage services of Flinders University Union are of the highest standard, and far from the ambit of criticism leveled by Minister Brendan Nelson regarding standard of product and service. Not only are staff friendly and extremely competent but they have also dedicated themselves to the mission of the Union. These hard working staff; mothers, fathers, members of families, will suffer with job losses and redundancies under this Bill.

I feel as though a student service charge should be as mandatory and inherent as a council rate, land tax or even security surcharge of air travel. When enrolling in university a student is undertaking a minimum of 3 years of campus life, and the direct or overarching support and service they will receive as a result of their student service fee. These benefits, like garbage collection from council rates, or security from travel surcharge, are directly sourced from a student service fee.

It is with gratitude I present this to the enquiry, but foster little hope in those members of the Government whom were blooded as student politicians, in truly representing the interest of students.

Yours Sincerely

Joe Szakacs