

Electoral Laws (Restoring Electoral Fairness) Amendment Bill 2025

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I am concerned that several proposed changes in this Bill risk undermining public trust in Queensland's electoral system rather than restoring fairness.

Voting rights

The proposal to remove voting rights from any group of adult citizens, including people serving custodial sentences, represents a serious departure from the principle of universal suffrage. The right to vote is a cornerstone of our democracy. Once voting rights can be selectively removed, a dangerous precedent is established. There is no clear evidence that disenfranchising prisoners improves electoral integrity or outcomes.

Political donations and perception of corruption

The proposal to lift or weaken restrictions on political donations from property developers is deeply troubling. Allowing greater financial influence from sectors with direct interests in government decision-making increases both the risk and the perception of corruption. Even where corruption does not occur, public confidence is damaged when money appears to buy political access or influence.

If the intent of this Bill is to strengthen public trust, increasing the role of private money in politics is counterproductive.

Independent oversight and transparency

Queenslanders have a high level of trust in the Queensland Electoral Commission. Proposals that reduce independent oversight—particularly in relation to party preselection processes and authorisation requirements—risk eroding that trust. Preselection processes are already opaque and uneven; reducing scrutiny will not improve fairness or transparency.

Lack of evidence-based justification

Significant changes to electoral laws should be grounded in clear evidence that existing arrangements are failing. The Bill does not demonstrate that current safeguards are inadequate, nor that the proposed changes will improve fairness, participation, or integrity.

Finally, I am concerned by the manner in which these significant changes are being advanced. Introducing sweeping reforms to electoral laws during the Christmas period, without taking them to an election or providing adequate time for public scrutiny, undermines confidence in the intent of the reforms.

Electoral reform should increase transparency, accountability, and public confidence. In its current form, this Bill risks doing the opposite. I urge the Committee to reconsider provisions that restrict voting rights, increase private influence, and reduce independent oversight.