

Penalties and Sentences (Sexual Offences) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2025

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Submitter Comments:

As a victim-survivor of child sexual abuse, I wish to speak to you. Character references for child sexual abusers aim to provide evidence that an act of abuse is outside the general character of the person in question. We know that child abusers are known for grooming individuals and communities into believing they are good, upstanding individuals. But this is a part of their act. No victim-survivor of child sexual abuse should bare witness to their perpetrator being called a good member of society. When child sexual abuse survivors are already disbelieved, it is an absolute disgrace that character references be considered alongside evidence. Child sexual abuse ruins lives - it ruins mine. If you can sexually abuse a child, that is your character. Full stop. Please consider the strength it takes to speak out as a child against an adult who held power over you. Please don't just limit good character references - abolish them entirely.