

From: [Ben Marshall](#)
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission: Electoral Reform Amendment bill 2013
Date: Sunday, 12 January 2014 12:06:28 PM

Dear Research Director - Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee

I wish to make a submission regarding the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill 2013 as a private individual and Queensland resident.

The policy objectives of this bill, as stated, would be laudable if they weren't undermined by the provisions contained within the bill.

Removing the cap on donations and expenditure will tend to ratchet up an already expensive electoral exercise, and benefit whichever party has greatest entree with wealthy donors. This would traditionally see the parties to the Right of the political spectrum advantaged, and it is disingenuous to claim the current cap would 'restrict participation in the political process'. I see no evidence to support this statement, and suggest that the amendment would make the playing field less level than more.

Increasing the disclosure threshold may bring Queensland into line with the Commonwealth or it may not - in either event it will produce greater secrecy concerning political donations at a time when many are calling for greater transparency in the political process. I would suggest that donations and political parties must be even more open than they are now to ensure our democracy isn't subverted by the flow of money. This amendment weakens democratic oversight, and therefore our democracy. We should know who is donating to whom and in what amounts.

The third amendment referring to returning the basis for electoral public funding to a stated dollar amount per vote should not be approved if it means the taxpayer will pay more for political advertising. When thousands have been sacked and the economy is weak, giving politicians more to advertise rather than face media and community more directly and honestly, I would suggest is unethical and weakens our democracy.

Electronic voting has been universally dismissed by experts in IT security as readily hackable and much less secure. I do not see how the massive costs of investing in insecure US electronic voting machines is justified in a time of belt-tightening, or how it truly assists voters with a disability. I see no evidence to support this claim.

The fifth amendment is too vague to comment on.

The sixth amendment seems reasonable.

Implementing a new system of proof of identity to prevent electoral fraud should not be allowed for three reasons: 1/ if it makes it more difficult for transient workers, homeless or otherwise disadvantaged voters - as is the experience in the US with similar attempts to restrict voting rights. 2/ The amount of electoral fraud

is so low that this amendment is not justified on that basis. 3/ The perception will be that this amendment, and the others in this particular legislative suite, are a copy of those laws passed by the Republican party in the USA to restrict the voting rights of minorities and disadvantaged by making it more difficult to vote. This undermines faith in our democracy, and for good reason - it will appear cynical, manipulative and undemocratic.

I urge the committee to reject this bill.

Yours sincerely,

Ben Marshall

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