

From: [Jo Brooks](#)
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill
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•In a free and fair democracy as many people must be free to vote as possible. Governments have a responsibility to make it easy for people to vote. Can the committee guarantee that these laws won't lead to voter disenfranchisement?.

•In a free and fair democracy all people must have an equal opportunity to vote. The proposed laws could have discriminatory effects on who is, and who isn't, able to vote - and the worst impact will likely be on those who live in remote communities, those who are elderly, young, disabled, homeless, or just move house frequently. Does the Committee know how what percentage of people from these groups may not be able to cast a vote if the laws are introduced?

•The proposed laws would waste the people of Queensland's time and money. The onerous process of checking everyone's IDs will make lines to vote longer. The staff required to do this will cost more money. The Attorney-General claims these laws will reduce 'voter impersonation' but there is no evidence that these proposals will actually reduce it, or that voter impersonation has ever made a difference in any election.

For some of us, the change in laws may mean longer queues to vote. But for those who are already poorly-represented in our democracy, this would throw up yet another barrier to voting. 62% of Indigenous Australians don't have a driver's licence¹. It's estimated that 13% have never had a birth certificate². How would strict, stringent voter identification laws affect them?

Truth is, Queensland's proposed new compulsory voter identification laws might be homegrown, but they sound more like something straight out of the US Republican tea party playbook. We saw something similar in 2006, when the Howard Government introduced similar laws that prevented an estimated 150,000 Australians from voting.

Please, in the interests of preserving our great democracy, I urge you do not pass this proposed amendment.

[1] 'Being Nobody - The Difficulties Faced by Aboriginal Victorians in Obtaining Identification,' J Orenstein, September 2009.

[2] 'Electoral Reform: Discussion Paper,' Queensland Government, January 2013.

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