

From: [Bronwyn Edwards](#)
To: [Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee](#)
Subject: Submission to the Electoral Reform Amendment Bill
Date: Wednesday, 15 January 2014 9:58:29 PM

I have deep concerns regarding the electoral reform bill currently under review by the Legal Affairs and Community Safety Committee which has been brought to my attention by GetUp!.

These laws appear to unfairly affect the most disadvantaged people in our community - those who do not have a fixed address, those who rent and are therefore more likely to be in-between addresses, and those who do not have a drivers licence. Governments have a responsibility to make it easy for people to vote so that as many people as possible participate in our democracy. Can the committee guarantee that these laws won't lead to voter disenfranchisement?.

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. Arguably, these people are among those who need their voices heard the most. Does the Committee know what percentage of people from these groups may not be able to cast a vote if the laws are introduced?

Does the Committee have evidence of current voter fraud that justifies these laws, and the potential risk to our democracy by making it hard for all Australians to vote, regardless of background or demographic?

These laws appear to be very familiar in nature to laws introduced by the Howard Government in 2006 under the Electoral Integrity Act, which similarly impacted those who were more likely to be young and between addresses. These changes were later found to be unconstitutional by the High Court of Australia. The Committee should strongly consider the political background and potential motivation for introduction of these types of laws against the actual evidence of voter fraud and proven effectiveness of these laws in reducing it.

If there is little evidence of voter fraud impacting the outcome of elections, and little evidence that these types of laws will work in reducing voter fraud, we should not be introducing laws that are very likely to have an impact on the ability of ALL citizens to vote on election day.

I hope that the Committee considers these very important questions in their review.

Sincerely,

Bronwyn Edwards
