



From: [Redacted]
Sent: Sunday, 28 January 2018 7:46 PM
To: Policy AGD
Subject: Review of Anti-Discrimination Act

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

To whom it may concern,

We are writing to express our concern at the challenge to religious freedom that appears to be embedded in the proposed changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act.

As parents, we understand we have a human right to choose the kind of education we want for our children. We want to give our children a Christian education, that is, an education provided by a school community where the employees in that community share the Christian faith and the practices of the school are shaped by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It does not matter to us whether the adults are teachers or a gardeners; all the employees in a Christian school community show our children what it is to be Christ-like through the grace they extend each other, and when they fall short, through the way they confess and forgive, just as Christ has forgiven them. It is not possible for people who have not experienced the grace of Jesus to model, teach and extend this grace to our children.

We wish to express concern that Christian schools, and thereby the parents who make up their membership, may have to apply for an exemption to employ only Christian staff. On what basis would that decision be made? I will certainly feel discriminated against if the faith-based school to which we send our children is forced to justify their religious practices to a secular body in order to exercise freedom of religion.

We cannot see any evidence that Christian schools are discriminatory. Christian schools are very inclusive in enrolment, and the Biblical principles on which the school is founded are made clear to parents and staff alike. Potential parents and employees are free to choose a different option if they don't wish to be part of a community which openly proclaims to put Christ at the centre of the educational process. We can't imagine a political party being keen to employ someone who is opposed to the party's political beliefs, even if they were otherwise well-qualified. Neither should Christian schools be forced to employ people who don't share their religious beliefs.

We are also very concerned about the proposal for a representative complaints model. We can see how important it is for the most marginalised in our society, for example homeless people or those with a disability, to have people advocate on their behalf. However, there must be better ways to do this. We fear a representative complains model will open the door for vexatious complaints, including from groups who have no necessary interest in the faith-based school our children attend, but who are offended by its Christian beliefs and practices.

Our family wish to be able to continue to exercise our religious freedom, including to state that marriage is between a man and a woman, and that God made human beings male and female, without fear of persecution. We would expect the Christian school to support us in these biblical religious beliefs and uphold them to our children, and we have grave concerns for any law which would prevent us from being free to bring up our children, at home or at school, with these religious beliefs.

We would like to thank the government for the opportunity to comment. Thank you for giving consideration to our thoughts. We pray God's blessing on you as you work diligently on the task of reviewing this important piece of legislation.

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We would very much like to read the report from the review and respectfully request you make it available in due course.

With much thanks,

