

The Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023 is a deeply concerning piece of legislation that poses significant risks to freedom of speech and independent journalism. The bill's broad and ambiguous language raises serious concerns about potential government overreach and censorship. By granting authorities the power to determine what constitutes "misinformation" and "disinformation," the bill could be easily manipulated to silence dissenting voices, stifle independent journalism, and curtail legitimate public discourse. Moreover, the lack of clear safeguards and oversight mechanisms further exacerbates fears of abuse of power. Instead of promoting open and informed public debate, this bill threatens to create an environment of fear and self-censorship, undermining the very principles of democracy it claims to protect. As citizens, we must defend our right to access diverse information and viewpoints, and this bill removes our fundamental democratic values.

I will not accept any restrictions on my freedom of speech. This bill should be cast aside and replaced with one which enshrines our right to freedom of speech in law. Free speech is an indispensable pillar of any democratic society, fostering an environment where individuals can express their thoughts, ideas, and opinions without fear of retribution. The right to free speech not only promotes open dialogue but also enables the exchange of diverse perspectives, leading to innovation and societal progress. It empowers individuals to challenge prevailing norms, question authority, and advocate for change, ultimately promoting social justice and human rights. Moreover, free speech is crucial for holding governments accountable, as it allows citizens to voice concerns and demand transparency from their elected representatives. By safeguarding free speech, we safeguard the principles of democracy, individual autonomy, and the pursuit of truth. In embracing free speech, we embrace the essence of a free and pluralistic society, where everyone has the opportunity to be heard and contribute to a more inclusive and enlightened world.