

I object to the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combatting Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023.

The proposed bill undermines freedom of speech by attempting to 'balance' that fundamental right with the notion of combating so-called 'misinformation'.

Fundamental rights cannot be balanced against anything, rather they are undermined.

The recent Covid-19 pandemic has shed light on this matter as much of the information presented by the public health authorities was later proven false.

Determining what qualifies as so-called misinformation/disinformation is subjective and entrusting a government agency to decide truthfulness raises concerns.

So-called 'misinformation', unless it incites violence, does not cause direct harm, and defining harm based on subjective criteria is problematic.

The bill grants excessive control to authorities and will lead to censorship.

Alternative approaches should be explored that do not infringe upon freedom of speech.

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