

Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts.

I write to you today with deep concern and utmost frustration regarding the proposed Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. As an Australian citizen, I am appalled by the implications this bill carries and strongly urge you to reconsider its enactment.

The democratic foundation of our great nation rests upon the fundamental principle that citizens are empowered to access the necessary information to make informed decisions, particularly when it comes to voting. In this digital age, where information is predominantly disseminated through digital platforms, it becomes evident that any legislation targeting the removal of political viewpoints under the guise of misinformation poses a significant threat to our democratic values.

By categorizing certain political party viewpoints as misinformation and subsequently removing them from digital platforms, this bill will effectively place voters in a state of darkness. Such actions directly impede their ability to access a diverse range of opinions and perspectives necessary for making informed voting decisions. This not only undermines the democratic process but also infringes upon the fundamental rights of Australian citizens.

Reacting with anger and outrage, I staunchly assert that the concept of combating misinformation itself should not be the focal point of legislative efforts. It is crucial to recognize that individuals possess the capacity to critically evaluate and discern information for themselves. The proposed legislation assumes citizens are incapable of exercising such judgment, undermining their intellect and decision-making abilities.

In a democratic society, it is not the role of the government to control or filter information that citizens are exposed to, but rather to foster an environment that encourages open and robust discourse. The free flow of ideas, even those we may disagree with, is vital to the health and vibrancy of our democracy.

Instead of pursuing this alarming course of action, I implore the government to explore more constructive and proactive measures. Educating citizens on media literacy, critical thinking, and providing easily accessible fact-checking resources are far more effective strategies to combat misinformation without undermining democratic values.

Therefore, I strongly urge the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts to reconsider the Communications Legislation Amendment (Combating Misinformation and Disinformation) Bill 2023. Let us protect and uphold the democratic principles that are the cornerstone of our nation, ensuring that Australian citizens have the freedom to access a wide range of political viewpoints and exercise their right to make informed decisions.

Yours sincerely,

