



To:

Senator Katy Gallagher – Senator for the ACT

Alicia Payne MP – Member for Canberra

David Smith MP – Member for Bean

Andrew Leigh MP – Member for Fenner

Via Email

7th February 2022

Re: Religious Discrimination Bill

We write to you with grave concerns about the Religious Discrimination Bill before the Federal Parliament and its impacts on Canberrans and people across Australia.

The proposed Bill was supposed to prohibit discrimination based on religious belief or activity (including having no religious belief or refusing to engage in religious activity) in areas such as employment, education and the provision of goods and services.

But the Bill that has been drafted threatens to undermine inclusive workplaces, schools, and access to services like healthcare, housing and community support without judgement and discrimination. Laws to protect religious people from discrimination should not be used to discriminate against LGBTIQ+ people, women, people with disability, and others.

Here in the ACT, we successfully balance religious discrimination protections with protections for LGBTIQ+ people through a robust human rights framework. It can be done, but this legislation isn't it.

We were disappointed to see reports that Federal Labor would support the Religious Discrimination Bill, albeit with 'minor and technical amendments'. We all know that Canberra's kind, compassionate and thoughtful community does not want to see laws passed that will give licence to prejudice in this way.

As Canberra's representatives in the Federal Parliament, we are asking you please to vote against this bill.

Regards,

Johnathan Davis MLA
ACT Greens Member for Brindabella

Tim Hollo
Australian Greens Candidate for Canberra