

Friday 8 December, 2017

Turnbull's attempt to stop civil society voices an attack on our democratic values

The Turnbull government's attempt to stop voices being heard through banning charities and non-governmental organisations from receiving foreign philanthropic funds is nothing short of an attack on freedom of speech and our democracy.

International philanthropy funds a range of projects which are key to supporting our health and education systems, support for indigenous communities and our fight against poverty and inequality.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Ged Kearney:

"This is an attack on all those fighting for the rights of the most vulnerable in our society and in the world."

"If passed, the Bill 2017 will stop public advocacy which holds politicians to account and ensure only the rich and powerful have the Government's ear when it comes to what is good for Australian families and communities."

"We support the Bill as it relates to foreign donations to political parties. But charities and advocacy groups are not political parties. This part of the Bill is an attempt by the Government to gag legitimate comment on matters of public interest."

"In many ways this is not surprising given that the Government is struggling to convince the public about its policies, and is in line with many previous attempts to stop dissenting voices such as gags through funding agreements and on the work done by charities in places like refugee centres in Nauru and Manus."

"We hope that other political parties will support amending the bill to ensure that it only applies to political parties and does not silence the voice of those standing up for the most vulnerable."

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Media contact: ACTU Media 03 9664 7315 or Peter Green: 0400 764 200

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