



Archbishop of Sydney

15 March 2019

Senator Rex Patrick
Centre Alliance
Via email: senator.patrick@aph.gov.au

Dear Mr Patrick,

I am writing to you as a consequence of the recent Senate Inquiry into the proposed amendments to the *Sex Discrimination Amendment (Removing Discrimination Against Students) Bill 2018*, and in particular because of the divergent positions expressed in the majority report and the two minority reports from Labor and the Greens. The key points of difference are whether the Sex Discrimination Act should protect the right of a religious school to teach and operate in accordance with its doctrines, tenets and beliefs, and to preference the employment of staff who support the religious ethos of the school.

Because of the continuing uncertainty about these matters, I am writing to you, in your capacity as a Centre Alliance Senator, requesting written answers to the following questions. Once we have collated your response with that of other parties, we plan to share this information within faith communities.

After the next election:

1. Will your party support legislation that will remove the current exemptions in s.38 of the SDA in relation to both students and teachers?
2. Will your party maintain the existing exemptions in s.21(3) that allow single-sex schools to enrol students of the one sex?
3. Is it the policy of your party that a faith-based school should be permitted to enrol and treat a student on the basis of their biological sex rather than their gender identity? For example, use of gendered pronouns, toilet facilities and school uniform.
4. Does it commit to support legislation that guarantees the right of faith-based schools to teach in accordance with their doctrines, tenets and beliefs? For example, teaching on traditional marriage, gender and sexuality.
5. Does it commit to support legislation to make it explicit that it is “reasonable” for a faith-based school to set rules and policies, and enforce these rules and policies within its student body and staff, in accordance with its doctrines, tenets and beliefs?
6. Does it commit to a positive protection in legislation that will allow a faith-based school to be able to employ staff who adhere to, or act in accordance with, the religious beliefs of that faith?

We respectfully request that you provide responses to these questions by Monday the 25th of March.

Grace and peace

Glenn N Davies
Archbishop of Sydney