



NEW ZEALAND UNION OF STUDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS (INC.)

TE RŌPŪ ĀKONGA O NGĀ WHARE WĀNANGA O AOTEAROA

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Press Release

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Attention: Education and Political reporters

Students call on National to listen to the people

Student representatives are calling on the Government and the Education and Science Select Committee to listen to the thousands of voices that have spoken out against the ACT Party's destructive Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill.

The Education and Science Select Committee is due to report back to Parliament by September 30. The Committee received more than 4400 submissions, with an overwhelming 98% opposed to the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill.

Submitters opposed to the Bill included students, many universities and polytechnics from around the country, students' associations, roopū, supportive NGOs and community organisations, the Human Rights Commission, Ako Aotearoa (National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence), key players in the tertiary sector, and many on campus and off campus clubs and societies. As well as hearing numerous submitters in Wellington, the Committee also travelled to Auckland, Christchurch, and Dunedin to hear submitters.

"From the outset, the Government said it was looking to hear from the public on this Bill. The overwhelming and diverse response against the Bill speaks volumes about the work and value of students' associations," says David Do, Co-President of the New Zealand Union of Students' Associations (NZUSA).

"National have been sent a clear message by students, the tertiary sector, and the community. National and the Select Committee need to make the right decision and listen to the will of the people," says Do.

"Kiwis value the ongoing role students' associations play in creating a well-rounded education experience, supporting high quality tertiary education, and ensuring students achieve their potential when in higher education," says NZUSA Co-President Pene Delaney.

"National needs to consider the feedback from those in the tertiary sector at the coalface of delivering important services, facilities and representation to students. Submitters recognised the Bill is unworkable, not supported by students, would result in major new costs to Government, institutions and students, and would cause significant disruption to the sector," said Delaney.

"In contrast, the few who supported the Bill were mostly confined to individuals with narrow concerns regarding just one campus. The needs and stability of the tertiary sector cannot and should not be put unnecessarily at risk on the whim of a few," said Delaney.

"This Bill is an ideological solution in search of a problem. This Bill, if passed, will instead cause many more problems for students and tertiary education. It is simply not worth the risk," concludes Do.

NZUSA is the national representative body for tertiary students and has been advocating on student issues since 1929.

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