



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

# National goes against 98% of submitters

Student representatives are appalled that National MPs have ignored the calls of students and the public tonight. National MPs have chosen to support Act's concerted attack on student services, as debate on the Second Reading of the Education (Freedom of Association) Amendment Bill begun this evening. Debate will conclude and a vote on the bill will be taken on the next Member's Day, which is scheduled for November 10.

"It is very disappointing that the Government is about to support a Bill that students and the public don't want, tertiary staff have spoken out against, and universities and polytechnics have also clearly warned against. When all parties concerned are against this Bill, why is the Government supporting it?" says NZUSA co-President David Do.

National Party members speaking on the Bill gave relatively short speeches and offered little justification for their position, in the face of overwhelming opposition and evidence from students and the public during the select committee process.

"Over 4800 submissions were received by the Select Committee on the Bill, and an overwhelming 98% were against. If National votes for the Bill when debate ends, it means it has chosen to side with a discredited fringe party against the 98% of submitters, students, parents, tertiary institutions, and the wider community," says Do.

"Students and the tertiary sector haven't asked for this Bill and will be hurt by the inevitable upheaval and loss of services as a result of this Bill. National say they are about prioritising front line services, yet this irresponsible decision will cut them," says NZUSA co-President Pene Delaney.

"As other speakers in Parliament have said tonight, there were several suggestions made by submitters on how to improve the current law (passed by National in 1998) or improve certain aspects of it. Instead, National has chosen to ignore these sensible pragmatic solutions and prioritise blind ideology over what works best."

"Students will continue to campaign against and raise public awareness about this unwanted, unworkable, and unnecessary Bill," concludes Delaney.

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

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