

South Australian democracy under threat

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Democracy in South Australia has become increasingly precarious with the likely passage of public health legislation which could permanently lock in COVID-19 emergency powers and remove the right for an appeal to the courts.

One Nation MLC Sarah Game said her amendments to prevent democratic principles from being discarded in the legislation had been ignored by the Labor government and the crossbench in the Legislative Council.

“I’ve been working with legal experts on amendments to ensure this legislation doesn’t compromise the rights of individual South Australians, but Labor and the crossbench have ignored the warnings about the harm this legislation could cause,” Ms Game said.

“Important legislative safeguards will be removed by this bill, and I’m reliably informed by the experts this legislation could prevent measures taken under it being challenged in a court. That is appalling.

“I’m certainly not the only one concerned about the overreach of this legislation and its impact on basic individual rights. The Law Society of South Australia is concerned about the scope of the legislation and the opacity of wide-ranging powers which can be exercised under it. It has warned that people’s basic rights and freedoms are at risk, and must be protected.

“That’s what I’ve tried to do by working with legal experts, but it’s quite clear Labor, the Greens and SA Best were not interested in protecting the basic rights and freedoms of the South Australian people. Instead of wielding power on behalf of the South Australian people as they’re supposed to do, they want to wield power over the South Australian people.

“This is not what South Australians voted for. Elected representatives are supposed to stand up for our rights, not trample on them, no matter how inconvenient it might be.

“I cannot possibly support this legislation in its current form. I oppose it in the strongest terms, and I call on the Malinauskas government to take this legislation back to the drawing board and have it considered by experts who will protect our rights instead of the police and health bureaucrats who have helped draft this legislation with a view to taking our rights away.”

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