



Senator the Hon Michaelia Cash

SHADOW ATTORNEY GENERAL

SHADOW MINISTER FOR EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION IN THE SENATE

SENATOR FOR WESTERN AUSTRALIA

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Albanese backs away from commitment on religious freedom laws

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese is being unrealistic if he expects a commitment to bipartisan support for religious discrimination laws the Coalition has not even seen yet.

The briefing released following the Government's caucus meeting indicates they will not proceed with changes to the laws without bipartisan support.

"We have not seen Labor's draft Religious Discrimination Bill and we have not seen their changes to the Sex Discrimination law. It is impossible to provide bipartisan support for Bills we have not seen," Senator Cash said.

"The Attorney-General hasn't even released the Australian Law Reform Commission report this legislation is guided by," she said.

"Stakeholders have been telling me there are some very concerning aspects to the proposed legislation," she said.

"From what we are hearing, Labor's laws will severely weaken protections for religious schools and how they operate. We are also very concerned with reports of a vilification clause, with a test set so low, it will threaten freedom of speech, Senator Cash said.

"This legislation must be put through a rigorous Parliamentary inquiry so all Australians can understand all the issues involved," Senator Cash said.

"The guiding principle here should be whether any proposal the Government puts forward actually protects people of faith, or whether it takes religious people and institutions backwards," she said.

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