02 DEC 2015

Marion Sanson  
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Dear Ms Sanson

Prisoner voting

Thank you for your correspondence of 14 September 2015 about prisoner voting and the steps the Government proposes to take in response to the High Court declaration of inconsistency.

The Government has no current plans to introduce legislation allowing prisoners to vote.

Parliament considered the issue of consistency with the New Zealand Bill of Right Act 1990 when it passed the Electoral (Disqualification of Sentenced Prisoners) Amendment Bill (the Bill). The Attorney General tabled a report in Parliament soon after the Bill was introduced, pursuant to section 7 of the Bill of Rights Act. This report, that the Bill appeared to be inconsistent with the Bill of Rights Act, was discussed during the parliamentary debates on the Bill.

Parliament may form a different view from the Attorney-General about whether a particular right or freedom is limited or whether the limitation is justified. In this case, Parliament decided to pass the Bill. The High Court declaration of inconsistency has no impact on this decision.

Thank you for writing.

Yours sincerely

[Signature]

Hon Amy Adams  
Minister of Justice