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VICTORIAN DONATION LAW CHANGES A THREAT TO FREE SPEECH

The Andrews government's proposed changes to Victorian donations law are undemocratic and a threat to freedom of speech, according to free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

"Making the choice to donate to a party or a cause is a political act. Government bans on donations are therefore a ban on political participation," said Simon Breheny, Director of Policy at the IPA.

"Voluntary campaign contributions are an important way of expressing support for a political cause. The strength of any democracy is a direct function of the freedom with which citizens have the ability to express themselves."

"Donation restrictions limit this freedom and damage the fabric of our democracy. They are a restriction on freedom of expression."

"The proposals would also unfairly favour the Labor side of politics. Its affiliates in the union movement would be unaffected by restrictions on donations, as they exert their political influence independently through manpower and advertising."

"While banning voluntary contributions the state government is also proposing a compulsory donation scheme in the form of taxpayer funding."

"Taxpayer funding for political parties is a self-granted subsidy. It is a shameful practice, and it is unacceptable in a liberal democracy," said Mr Breheny.

"It's unlikely that political parties are going to endear themselves to the public by giving themselves more money," said Mr Breheny.

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