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FREE SPEECH BILL AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE TURNBULL GOVERNMENT

Senator Day's *Racial Discrimination Amendment Bill 2014* is a significant opportunity for the Turnbull government to demonstrate its commitment to freedom of speech, according to free market think tank the Institute of Public Affairs.

The Senate will debate Family First Senator for South Australia Bob Day's *Racial Discrimination Amendment Bill 2014* tomorrow. The bill proposes to remove the words 'offend' and 'insult' from section 18C of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, which currently makes it unlawful to "offend, insult, humiliate or intimidate" a person on the basis of their race, colour or national or ethnic origin.

"The Day amendment provides an opportunity for the Turnbull government to show where it stands on freedom of speech," says Simon Breheny, director of the Legal Rights Project at the Institute of Public Affairs.

"Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull has promised to lead a 'thoroughly liberal government committed to freedom, the individual and the market.' A sure way to prove this would be by supporting a bill that helps to restore free speech in Australia."

"It should not be unlawful to offend or insult someone. Freedom of speech goes to the heart of liberal democracy."

"Senator Day's bill is not a full repeal of section 18C. Removing the words 'offend' and 'insult' does not fully restore freedom of speech in Australia. But the bill is a significant improvement."

"Supporting this bill would send a positive message about the direction of the Turnbull government," says Mr Breheny.

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