Legislation and Business Environment

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**Summary**

This paper intends to review the level to which the parliament influences societal practices, especially when it comes to the business environment. As such, the aim of this paper is to establish the various laws established by the parliament and how such laws have played a role in regulating the business society. A review of material from government databases pertaining to parliamentary roles, and other scholarly sources such as books and journals will allow for establishment of a distinctive view of the topic, and offer relevant information that will facilitate the achievement of a high quality paper. The APA format will be used to write the paper.

In the introduction section of the paper, the author will introduce the topic and offer an overview of the various areas that are to be covered throughout the paper. The body section will review legislations passed by the parliament and their role in regulating business interactions across Australia. These laws will range from consumer protection laws, laws that govern business structuring, environmental protection laws, anti-discrimination laws, anti-terrorism laws, privacy laws, to laws against criminal activities in the business environment such as anti-fraud laws. The impact of this laws on the business relationships between businesses and individuals and businesses and other business will be elaborately discussed in this section. The author will conclude by summing up the areas discussed throughout the paper and providing recommendations on how the parliament can further promote positive affect across the business society.

**Introduction**

The parliament is a body responsible for making laws within the country. Legislation process is important since the outcome of these acts formed in the parliament have the effect on the society and business environment around the country. A bill is a proposal for a change of law. If this proposal is presented to the parliament and is approved, it becomes an act. This paper is going to discuss parliamentary acts and how they affect the conduct of the society in areas of business transactions and interactions adversely. In the case of Australia, examples of these acts include Competition and Consumer Protection acts, Environmental Acts, Corporations Acts, Anti-terrorism Act, Work relations act, privacy laws and several Discrimination Acts. These acts capture different sectors in the society and directly or indirectly affect the business transactions and interactions. Parliamentary acts are relevant in any country since they regulate several activities in the country regarding business as it will be explained later on.

**The Role of Parliament in Regulating Society**

To begin with, the parliament protects the consumers from the unfair practices of business organizations. It also regulates how businesses interact to promote better trading between firms. In addition, parliament protects other business from unfair trading and prohibits the misuse of monopoly power. An example of a legislation passed by the parliament is the Competition and Consumers Protection Act of 2010. This act states that through fair trading practices, fair competition and provision of consumer protection, the Australian welfare is enhanced. The law regulates the type of services delivered to the customers, explains the unfair market practices, and monitors the prices of the products (Australian Competition and Consumer Commision, 2016). It ensures that the goods produced by the businesses are of good standards so that the consumers can be satisfied. The act affects the conduct of companies since it creates a linkage to the user. Therefore, businesses in the country should have up to standard goods and should not infringe consumer rights. In case of increased complaints, businesses may be subject to legal liabilities among other devastating consequences such as reputational damage (Australian Competition and Consumer Commision, 2016). Enterprises have to liaise with these act so as to be able to deliver the best to the consumers. In cases of non-satisfactory services or products to the consumers, the acts explain the areas of returns, refunds to customers, warranties, advertising, and marketing.

Secondly, the Parliament controls how business entities in Australia should be structured and how they should be formed. An example of an act that regulates the corporations is the Corporations Act of 2001 (Vickery & Flood, 2011). The act establishes regulations and laws that deal with any business entities in Australia at any level. It explains the relationship in partnership entities and investment schemes. It describes the formation procedures and how the companies operate, the duties of officers and issues with takeovers. Corporations in the Australia have to follow these guidelines provided by the Corporations Act of 2001 to be accredited as a business entity. Small businesses in Australia are expected to be able to adhere to the corporation law to be registered by the Australian government. The parliament also regulates the environment in relation to the businesses operations through environmental acts. They also protect the society from environmental hazards caused by firms in the country. An example of the environmental law is the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999, which states that the environment should be protected and managed efficiently. In Queensland’s case, the Environment Protection Act formulated in 1994 protects against environmental harm, with members of the public required to report any activities that may be deemed to be detrimental to the environment (Queenland Government, 2016). The parliament provides ground for equality and fair treatment of workers in the business climate. The house comes up with acts that promote equal treatment of employees in the workplaces. Such laws have played a major role in minimizing cases of discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, race, sexual orientation, nation of origin, and gender among others, in the workplace. Some of the laws that have been established by the parliament to this effect include the Workplace Relations Amendment (Work Choices) Act 2005, the Fair Work Act 2009, and the Age Discrimination Act 2004 (Vickery & Flood, 2011).

Parliament also protects the society from acts of terrorism through the formulation of the Anti-Terrorism laws such as the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2005 (Mullins, 2011). This law protects Australia from terrorism acts and prevents terrorists from getting into the country. It has also facilitated the process through which tools that identify, prosecute, convict and punish terrorists are developed. The law also allows Australia to effectively work with the international community in fighting terrorism. It is important to note that terrorism has devastating effects for businesses including loss of property, loss increased cost of production, and increased investor risk, among other factors. As a result of the effectiveness of these laws, Australia has experienced low cases of terrorism as compared to other countries (Mullins, 2011).The Parliament also puts into consideration how the private information of individuals and businesses is handled. As such, the parliament has come up with the laws to protect privacy of information, including the Privacy Act of 1988 (Vickery & Flood, 2011). The Act defines personal information as information or an opinion that is either true or false, recorded or not, about a known individual or an individual who is reasonably identifiable. The common information in this case may include names, addresses, mobile phone numbers, date of birth, bank details, medical records, and so on. In terms businesses the Privacy Act regulates the consumer credit reporting in the country. The health records are regarded as the most important in the Australia, and the act provides protections around its handling. For example, all organizations that offer medical services should provide the client with a consent before they collect any medical information from the customer (Australian Government, 2016).

The parliament also ensures credibility in the business environment by establishing laws against criminal activities including the corruption, fraud, theft, and deceit of consumers (Gottschalk, 2010). These laws try to promote honesty within the business environment. The Australian government does not allow practices of corruption as corruption is understood to undermine the growth of small businesses and to facilitate the poor development of the economy in the country as well. Therefore, some rules and regulations outline the punishment of cases of corruption and fraud. The parliament protects businesses from these immoral societal activities by punishing the practices by either incarceration of fines. The legislature came up with The Punishment of Offences Act in 2001, which explains the punishment of crimes against the acts of Parliament that occur in the business environment. The act also defines the procedures of arrest and the punishment of the respective crimes (Gottschalk, 2010). The parliament has also come up with laws that promote unity and peace in the society, hence, the better environment for business activities. Case in point, the Justices of the Peace Act of 2005, was formed to create clear roles and duties of the Justices in South Australia. It explains the importance of recognizing the court as a place to sought out justice and peace (Vickery & Flood, 2011). Members of parliament, as leaders, play a major role as the ambassadors of peace and unity in the country. In any business interactions, if there is a disagreement or a case of unfair trading, the law provides that the conflict is taken to court to allow for arrival at an amicable solution for both parties. Every business is also advised to have a lawyer or an attorney to battle for their cases in the court.

**Conclusion**

It is evident that the parliament, being the legislation organ in the land, regulates the societal business environment through the formation of these laws. The legislature protects consumers and the business entities. It regulates environmental measures for companies to carry on with their activities effectively. In addition, the parliament promotes the equality and fairness towards workers in workplaces and provides for the guidelines to the formation of new business entities. The parliament also fights crimes and terrorism thus creating a better environment for businesses to operate. Lastly, the legislature plays a massive role in promoting unity and guarding personal and organizational information. Therefore, the house is critical in the running of business activities around the country and helps the society as a whole in regulating key issues in the society.

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