

Margot Sheldon

From:



Amendment Bill – Sections 12

(A,B,C,D) and Section 19 (B,C)

Honorable member D. Nkosi,

Chairperson of the Portfolio Committee for Trade and Industry,

National Parliament

Cape Town

Honorable member / Chairperson N. Nkosi

Re: Comments on Copyright Amendment Bill – Sections 12 (A,B,C,D) and Section 19 (B,C)

Thank you for the invitation to submit comments on the above sections of the Copyright Amendment Bill.

I am Gertrude Fester, an academic, author, feminist, activist, advocate, poet, educator and former ANC member of the SA Parliament until 1999. Thereafter I was Gender and Transformation consultant to Minister of Minerals and Energy , Dr Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuke and Strategic Liaison officer for Mayor of Cape Town, NomaIndia Mfeketo. Thereafter I was a Commissioner on Gender Equality (2001 to 2006). Between 1975 and 1996 I have taught at High Schools and Hewat College of Education. Subsequent to my PhD at the London School of Economics, I have been professor at various institutions including the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University, USA, University of Rwanda and Sol Plaatje University. Currently I am honorary Professor at the Centre for African Studies and the Khoi and San Centre, University of Cape Town.

In the past 2 years I have become more aware of the contents and benefits of the Copyright Amendment Bill. I am dismayed how so many multinationals, who already benefit from such exceptions, are opposing the Bill. This is indeed difficult to comprehend, when the majority of our people were so cruelly deprived of a quality education and freedom of access to information and freedom of expression for so long. What is more of a travesty is that a 43-year-old apartheid piece of legislation is still in effect in our democracy.

Years ago, I was incarcerated by the apartheid regime for 2 years and was in solitary confinement for 5 months. I cannot tell you how the starvation from access to information and reading materials affected me. The quest for knowledge in humans is like breathing air, yet our current copyright law restricts or prohibits access to information and sharing of knowledge for the benefit of all South Africans. I am a writer, scholarly author, poet (creator and producer of works), as well as a consumer of information and knowledge. I believe the Copyright Bill provides a fair and balanced framework to enable me and persons in general to function in all these and other capacities.

Undoubtedly, I support the exceptions in Section 12 (A,B,C,D) and Section 19(B,C) and hope that the Bill will not be delayed for much longer.

The Bill speaks to our Bill of Rights and we need it urgently!

Thank you

Gertrude M.N.Fester (Professor)

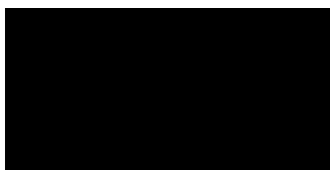
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