

The Government is changing the law to protect New Zealand from foreign interference

You can have your say on this change

Information below explains what the Government is doing and how you can get involved.

Submissions are due on 16 January 2025.

What is happening?

The Government is strengthening the criminal law to help Police and other agencies respond to foreign interference.

These changes are being made by the **Crimes (Countering Foreign Interference) Amendment Bill**.

The Bill is being considered by Parliament's Justice Select Committee. The Committee will make recommendations on how the Bill can be improved before it becomes a law.

What is foreign interference?

Foreign interference is when a foreign government tries to interfere in New Zealand's society in a secretive, coercive, or dishonest way. This activity is harmful to New Zealand and our communities.

Foreign interference can affect the whole country. For example, it can affect national security, the economy, our elections, or government decisions.

Interference can also affect individuals and communities. Activities can make people feel unsafe or afraid to do or say things because of what a foreign government might do to them or their families. This is not okay because our laws give people rights and freedoms, and foreign governments should not try to control the activities of people here.

How is the law being changed?

Foreign interference by any country against New Zealand is unacceptable.

New offences will make foreign interference and other harmful activities illegal. These will be some of the most serious offences in New Zealand. Existing offences are also being changed to better protect sensitive government information.

These changes will mean that people who do harmful activities for a foreign government can be stopped and punished under our criminal law.

How can I have my say?

Parliament's Justice Select Committee is asking members of the public to share their opinions on the Bill by "calling for submissions". This happens over a set number of days when the Committee is considering the Bill.

More information about the Bill and how to make a submission can be found online at: <https://bills.parliament.nz/v/6/5c7f002d-e4b4-4573-5563-08dd042d0cd2?Tab=history>

The Committee normally makes submissions available to the public on Parliament's website. Before making a submission, you can ask the Committee to keep your submission secret if you do not want it to be public. The Committee will need to agree before you send your submission.

The Ministry of Justice's website also has information about foreign interference, the Bill, and how you can report foreign interference to Government agencies. This can be found in the "Countering Foreign Interference" section on the Ministry's Key Initiatives webpage: <https://www.justice.govt.nz/justice-sector-policy/key-initiatives/countering-foreign-interference>

Submissions are due on 16 January 2025.