

# ANC makes U-turn on Secrecy Bill - and lives to tell the tale

By [Osiname Molefe](#)

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"Tell us another one" was the response from everyone when ANC chief whip Mathole Motshekga said the party's reason for pulling the [Protection of Information Bill](#) on the eve of its tabling at the national assembly was because the ANC cares about what its constituency has to say. But despite the derision, Motshekga did not change his tune. He's adamant the ANC is listening. And cares.



It beggars belief that South Africa's democratic process may actually have prevailed (for now). After one year and 20 or so days, has a [grassroots civil society movement](#) succeeded where opposition parties have failed? Frankly, no. The bill being pulled at the 11th hour has more to do with internal ANC squabbles than civil society pressure. And that theory may have merit.

Before the ANC parliamentary caucus met on Monday, 19 September 2011, at 2pm to debate whether the bill should be withdrawn, ANC secretary general Gwede Mantashe had all but announced that the bill would be withdrawn. And by the time the caucus meeting began, it was confirmed that the bill would be withdrawn, reinforcing the idea that the decision had been made over the weekend at the ANC's national executive committee and that the caucus's function was to rubber-stamp it. This left Motshekga with just one question to answer. Why?

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