




Speech by  
**Grace Grace**

**MEMBER FOR BRISBANE CENTRAL**

Hansard Wednesday, 9 March 2011

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**CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING) AND OTHER  
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL; CHILD PROTECTION (MORE  
STRINGENT OFFENDER REPORTING) AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Ms GRACE** (Brisbane Central—ALP) (8.46 pm): I rise to support the government's Child Protection (Offender Reporting) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2010 and to oppose the opposition amendment bill. If one had been listening to the contributions of the member for Kawana and the member for Noosa, one might think that they had come in here with a comprehensive amendment bill that they had really thought through. One might think that they had thought about national consistency and how to better protect children. However, they have introduced an amendment bill that contains two minor amendments that, in reality, do absolutely nothing.

**Mr Elmes:** So what does yours do?

**Ms GRACE:** I will tell you what ours does. I take that interjection. If you had only taken the time to read—

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER** (Ms O'Neill): Order! You will address your comments through the chair.

**Ms GRACE:** I will address my comments through the chair. If they had taken the time to actually read our bill and understand its contents, they would know how their bill is completely empty of any proper policy to protect children in this state. Their bill contains absolutely nothing when compared with the government's bill. It is a disgrace that Laurel and Hardy over there can stand up and make outlandish comments about how this government's bill does not adequately protect children and that the only saviour of children in this state was a government that, despite being in power for 32 years, never introduced such a bill. It was a Labor Party that first introduced an offenders' register. So what if, in April, they introduced an inadequate amendment bill? After extensive consultation, having looked at the recommendations of the committees that provided the reports, this government has brought in a much more balanced and comprehensive amendment bill that will actually do something to protect children in this state. In this House nothing gnaws at you more than hearing the high moral ground being taken by members opposite, as if members on this side of the House do not care about children. We take great offence at that. That kind of talk should stop, because nobody in this House owns the defence of children in this country. It is absolutely pathetic and, honestly, members on that side of the House lose respect by saying that.

I return to the bill and I will address my comments through the chair. There are two minor amendments to the requirements to report to police. One of them is about offenders reporting not every 12 months, but every three months. Members opposite ignore all the stuff that is contained in this bill, and I know a number of speakers will go through it. Let me remind the House once again that it was a Labor government that introduced into Queensland some of the toughest sex offender laws in this nation—this government. The opposition has brought in a piddling amendment bill so that somehow it can now claim the moral ground. It is offensive and ridiculous and I am just about to point out how ridiculous it is.

This bill requires extensive reporting now, with a number of changes incorporated in this legislation. It brings about consistency not only in Queensland but throughout Australia. It has taken on board the recommendations of a number of committees that have reported. It takes into account the vulnerable nature of the children. Rather than prolong the time limit in which these offenders are to report when they have had three days of contact with children—not necessarily consecutively—they have to report not in three months as the opposition bill says, but within 24 hours. That is the difference between our bill and the opposition's. Under the opposition bill, offenders would only have to report every three months. Our bill requires that, if they are in contact with a child, the reporting time is to be reduced from 28 to seven days. In one week they have to report—

**Mr Elmes:** What about just the normal reporting process?

**Ms GRACE:** Yours still maintains it at three months.

**Mr Elmes:** Every 12 months.

**Ms GRACE:** So yours is inadequate.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms O'Neill):** Order! I ask the member for Noosa to cease interjecting and for both of you to talk through the chair.

**Ms GRACE:** In relation to contact with a child in any one day, once that reaches three days, they have 24 hours in which to report it. Members opposite come in here with a provision for contact every three months and claim that theirs is going to protect children. It is utter rubbish and we all know it.

The government bill goes even further. The bill requires the reporting of telephone carriage services, internet service providers, email address and other electronic identifiers used or intended to be used by a reportable offender. That is not contained in the opposition's bill. The LNP does not even address the issue. This overcomes a significant deficiency in the existing legislation that we have identified—and the LNP has not—whereby such devices are used to facilitate the kinds of crimes committed by child sex offenders. There is not a word of it in their amendment bill; it is very strong in ours. The obligation for reportable offenders to provide these particular details will also assist in deterring reportable offenders from accessing child exploitation material and engaging in predatory behaviour such as grooming via the internet. I repeat once again that it is not included in their bill. A failure to comply with reporting obligations—

**Mr ELMES:** I rise to a point of order. I detailed, point by point, through my presentation the provisions that are in the government's bill that we welcomed and we will support. To have the member for Brisbane Central casting over that old ground is just not acceptable. I take offence at it.

**Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is no point of order.

**Ms GRACE:** A failure to comply with these reporting obligations will result in an offence committed under section 50 of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting) Act 2004, the penalties for which have been significantly increased.

This government has left no stone unturned in identifying the ways that a reportable offender might communicate with potential victims to commit offences. The bill amends the existing legislation to require the offender to provide details of any carriage service, internet service provider or carriage service provider within the meaning of the Telecommunications Act 1997—very extensive in modern-day social media techniques. Reportable offenders will be required to provide details of the type of any internet connection used including whether the connection is a wireless, broadband, ADSL or dial-up connection and details of any internet user names, instant messaging user names, chat room user names or any other user name intended to be used by the offender through the internet or other electronic communication services. It covers all grounds.

The bill also requires reportable offenders to present valid passports—another issue which has been ignored by the opposition—when reporting personal details and, subsequently, when returning from travel outside Australia along with any travel documents in their possession. This measure is for verification of reported travel and deters child sex tourism while also supporting the investigation of it.

Our bill is comprehensive. There are many other areas that it covers. It increases the penalties from a maximum of two years to five years. It expands the matters about which offenders need to report. It tightens the reporting time frames related to completing initial reports in circumstances where an offender genuinely resides or has an unsupervised contact with a child. It even requires offenders to provide DNA samples. It expands the range of offences which will require reporting and it introduces provisions to protect special needs offenders. This is a far more comprehensive amendment bill than the opposition's bill. I fully support and congratulate the minister on its introduction. I support our bill and claim that the LNP bill is glaringly lacking the necessary amendments to make children in this state safe and also in Australia. I commend the government bill to the House.