




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR MOUNT ISA

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CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING—PUBLICATION OF INFORMATION) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KATTER** (Mount Isa—KAP) (7.49 pm): I rise to speak in support of the Child Protection (Offender Reporting—Publication of Information) Amendment Bill. I echo the calls made by the member for Condamine in complimenting the member for Dalrymple for bringing this bill before parliament. It strikes at the heart of how a good political system can work when a minor party can contribute to the ideas that come into the House. I do not think Liberal, Labor or anyone else has the mortgage on good ideas and I think it is arrogant to suggest otherwise. We are presenting a bill that makes a lot of sense. Everyone agrees with its principle, but we are going to see opposition to it on a political basis. That is a damn shame and it reflects very poorly on this government.

This bill will make available a register for people who are concerned about dangerous sex offenders in the community. It will not inadvertently capture anyone who has not been convicted of these types of crimes. It will only capture dangerous sex offenders. It enhances the rights of those children who are at risk over the rights of those criminals who have been classed as dangerous sex offenders. I think that is a very reasonable proposition. If the government has any other concerns relating to technicalities in the bill, they should make an amendment so we can pass it and keep kids safe.

One of the arguments we just heard is that the police already have powers. So why not enhance them? If members agree with the principle of police having powers, why not enhance them? On the notion that we should have access to this type of register, that we should be able to see if there are dangerous sexual predators in our neighbourhood, why not enhance that ability? What is wrong with that? While I am happy to acknowledge the existence of the blue card system, it falls hopelessly short of delivering on this issue. The government has already strengthened provisions; I will acknowledge that. I did say that no-one has the mortgage on good ideas. We vote for government bills if they have merit all the time.

The government has strengthened the back-end processes for these offenders. Yes, punitive measures can be instituted, but that does not resolve the preventive measure that we are introducing tonight. We are putting in the safeguards. That latitude is there with the commission. However, not everyone has access to that. This is a good, effective system. It has been implemented in the US and other parts of the world and there is a dire need for it here. Yes, it is a very emotional subject. It is something we can deliver on. All it will take is for people to bury their pride and arrogance and vote for a bill that has been presented by a minor party. I think it will reflect very poorly on this parliament if we cannot get this legislation through tonight.

I might add that this does highlight the effectiveness of having some balance in the parliament. I listen daily to people saying that Independents, minor parties and crossbenchers are irrelevant and asking what we do. Guess what? Shane Knuth put forward a bill relating to flying foxes and miraculously we saw a change to the policy on flying foxes. We put forward this bill and miraculously

we started seeing some action on child protection. I think that is a good thing. I think it is a good thing we are talking about it and we are debating it. It forces some change in the policy. That is good. It is a good thing we are doing for the parliament. Everyone can visit their own conscience before they vote on this tonight. I believe in protecting those kids and enhancing their rights over the rights of dangerous sex offenders.