




Speech By
Deb Frecklington

MEMBER FOR NANANGO

Record of Proceedings, 4 June 2015

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS (RESTORING FAIRNESS) AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Mrs FRECKLINGTON** (Nanango—LNP) (8.19 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill. Can I say from the outset that the LNP recognises and respects the rights of the public sector and local government workers. We believe that a sound economy, sound financial management and a focus on creating jobs are beneficial to all Queenslanders. However, in regard to the changes proposed in this legislation, I am extremely concerned. I am concerned about the level of union focus in this legislation and the amount of influence unions have over this Labor government. What we have already seen is the reinstatement of the old Labor policy encouraging unionism, with the document titled *Queensland government commitment to union encouragement*. This document is seriously incredible.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I have read the document. Why is it incredible? Because it clearly instructs senior public servants to actively cooperate in union activity so the Labor government can honour a commitment to encourage union membership amongst its employees. It clearly says—

Passive acceptance by agencies of membership recruitment activity by unions does not satisfy the government's commitment.

Those public servants—like the many who have contacted my office about this issue—who actually do not wish to be a member of a union are asking where their job security is. But more than that they want to know what will happen with their job advancement, because all of a sudden, apart from the fact that their personal details are going to be given out, they have to tell someone who employs them that they do not wish to join a union so therefore, bang, there goes their career advancement. What a shame to the future of the—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: So rather than them getting on with the job they are being paid to do, our senior public servants must spend their time playing host and making cups of tea for union delegates when they visit the workplace. Then they must provide employees with documents encouraging them to join a union and provide their new details.

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: It is interesting that the government interjectors are asking me to name them. I am more than happy to go out and show government members the correspondence I have just read. I actually just received a post on my Facebook page which said, 'Good on you. Together Queensland is disgraceful. I live in the Mount Ommaney seat and have been bombarded by the unions. Please fire it back.'

I particularly want to give a personal example. Since I have been a member in this House, my husband, my three daughters and I have been personally attacked by two unions. My children are of school age. I was contacted at 10 o'clock one evening advising me not to send my children to school

the next day because of the diabolical diatribe from the local Teachers' Union over my children and what school they attended. I see the education minister is smirking; I certainly was not. The principal of the school—

Ms JONES: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I take offence at that comment. I was not smirking but I do not like attacks on the Teachers' Union either.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I beg your pardon. I missed the last bit from the minister.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Member for Nanango, the minister has taken personal exception to that. Will you withdraw please?

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I withdraw. It is not unqualified. I did not hear the second part so I am not sure what the minister said but I do withdraw. What I am saying is that because I am not a member of a party that supports unions it was okay for them to attack my children and for me to receive warnings from a local Teachers' Union rep not to send my children to school. But worse than that—because my kids are obviously fairly tough and I sent them anyway—was what the local ETU did to me. They directed their union members to boycott my husband's—

Ms GRACE: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. Can you please rule on relevance in relation to the clauses in the legislation?

Opposition members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I think we have been pretty lenient all night in terms of where we have been going with this so I am happy for the member to continue. There is no point of order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: I am happy to get to the point and my point is this: union members were told by the delegate to boycott my husband's business. But little did the union realise that those union members were honest enough to come into my husband's shop and tell him. But it gets worse. Overnight there was a 25 per cent drop in sales in my husband's business. What the union delegates and the union people do not understand is that we employed eight staff, so through the entire disgusting boycott my husband had to continue to pay eight staff members. The unions had absolutely no concern for the eight juniors who worked in my husband's business. They had no concern for the fact that my husband's business and my husband's mental health—

Government members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Pause the clock. I remind members that they should not be interjecting unless they are sitting in their allocated seat. I call for order.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: The worst was when a lady came into my husband's shop and said to him that if her husband knew she was in there the union would—

Government members interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: This is exactly why people do not respect the union movement anymore. This is absolutely diabolical. It has been reported in the *South Burnett Times* and it was reported on *South Burnett* online. I ask those on the other side of the House to go and check the history because this is exactly what happened. The jobs of eight of my husband's employees were in jeopardy because of a direction from the unions to boycott my husband's shop. The unions had no concern at all for the employees of a small business. His employees were not in a union so the unions would not care. It is just incredible that this Labor government has come in here believing that every single public servant wants to be in a union. Judging from the people who come into my office, I can tell the House that, trust me, there are not many out there at all who want to be in a union. It is simply not the case. Patrick Hannaford wrote an article in the *Australian* which states—

The use of taxpayer resources to increase union membership is a fundamental attack on freedom of association, but it shouldn't come as a surprise to the public.

...

... only 12 per cent of Australia's voting-age population consists of trade union members. 51 per cent of federal ALP parliamentarians are former union officials.

The Queensland government's actions are merely the result of this union influence.

I am happy to table that article.

Tabled paper: Article from the *Australian*, dated 21 May 2015, titled 'Party Time for Union Hacks: Symptoms of Labor's malaise take an ugly form in Queensland' [568].

While it is no secret that Labor is supported by the union movement, it does not mean it is appropriate for their political affiliation to spill into the independent Public Service. Labor needs to level with Queenslanders on this one, particularly the public servants whose independence is being completely diminished.

In conclusion, it was quite interesting when we saw in this House last night one of the ministers flag around some letters from our constituents which were written to him in good faith. Obviously, it is the case that, as they are not unionised, we are not even allowed to write to the ministers of this new government unless we get a union stamp on it. It is an absolute disgrace and an abuse of power.

Ms Jones: You can write to me anytime you want.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: And I have and you flashed it around.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Hart): Order! Members, let's not toss things across the chamber. Let's direct things via the chair, please.

Ms Jones interjected.

Mrs FRECKLINGTON: No, Minister Bailey. I think that the LNP showed much common sense in addressing the award modernisation process. I only wish those opposite would see common sense when it comes to legislative changes such as those that are before the House. With that, I cannot support this bill.