




Speech By
Tarnya Smith

MEMBER FOR MOUNT OMMANEY

Record of Proceedings, 30 November 2016

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS BILL

 **Mrs SMITH** (Mount Ommaney—LNP) (10.02 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this debate in an attempt to halt another—

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! Members on my right, please allow the member for Mount Ommaney to be heard.

Mrs SMITH: I rise to make a contribution to this debate in an attempt to halt a further nail in the coffin for small business that this bill attempts to inflict. I think it is absolutely laughable that those on the government side actually believe that they are acting in the best interests of small business. This bill is yet another example of how anti business this Palaszczuk Labor government is. This bill is yet another hit to the confidence of the business community. This is going to put at risk the livelihoods of mums and dads and place undue pressure on an already stressed small business sector.

Let me first draw the attention of the House to the chair's foreword in the committee report. The member for Sunnybank stated—

This Bill was developed by the government following the consultation process during and following the review.

We all heard how the review was made up. The member for Sunnybank needs to look up the definition of consultation. In their submission the CCIQ counters this statement when they said—

... our organisations express concern that the decision to declare Easter Sunday a public holiday was a last minute ministerial directive that occurred entirely outside the scope of the appointed Reference Group. CCIQ can confirm that no discussions were had on the proposal for an Easter Sunday public holiday as part of our participation in the Reference Group.

The CCIQ submission goes on to state—

Further, the business community expresses deep frustration with the lack of formal consultation on this issue. Our organisations believe the State Government should have exercised best practice legislative development by drawing on the views of those most impacted by the decision.

It sounds like a lot of consultation went on. We are seeing a pattern of this with this government. Last night we saw the watering down of the VLAD laws when the community clearly did not want that to occur. Now what we are seeing is that the business community will get Easter Sunday as a public holiday. That will have a huge impact on their businesses. How do I know this? I know this because I ran my own business for seven years—a butcher shop and cafe which operated seven days a week. I will get back to the devastating effects the Easter Sunday public holiday will have in a minute.

Last year this government brought in a range of laws about union encouragement and moving Labour Day back to May. Now that they brought in the Easter Sunday public holiday what we will see for business—and this is the reality—is that we will have Easter, then Anzac Day and then the May Day holiday. That will be six public holidays in a three-week period. That hurts cash flow. That is going to absolutely cruel cash flow. I know that. You sit there and shake your head. You have never run a business. Where was the minister for the three years—

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! Could I ask the member to direct her comments through the chair.

Mrs SMITH: I apologise, Madam Deputy Speaker. Where was the minister during her three-year sabbatical? She did not open up a small business because she knew they would be a bunch of mugs. Employers employ people but they need to make a profit. You are absolutely destroying that, Minister. The ALP thinks so little of small business. The CCIQ gives examples of this.

Ms Grace interjected.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, let us have a look at the survey from 3 November 2016. That is two years after yours—

Ms Grace interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I am keen to discourage the minister and the member for Mount Ommaney from having a conversation. Minister, we have had some low level interjections from you. They are starting to ramp up. Member for Mount Ommaney, could you continue to address your comments through the chair.

Mrs SMITH: What we have in the minister is a business slayer. She is the slayer of businesses. That view is supported by the CCIQ survey of 3 November this year. A sizeable sample of 1,605 people were surveyed. Let us look at some of those results. People were asked, 'Do you believe the state government's policies are supportive of small business?' Some 60.9 per cent said that they worked against small business. They were then asked, 'How would you rate the performance of the state government?' Some 38.2 per cent rated it very poor. A total of 87.2 per cent of people think the government is average to very poor. If we work out the net favourability it is around minus 1,193.

I move on to the other provision in the bill which I think is really concerning—the introduction of the adverse outcome. By introducing this what the minister is effectively doing is cutting the legs out from under managers to actually be able to manage the departments and do their jobs. As I said, last year we saw the introduction of the union encouragement awards which included a clause asking managers to actively participate in encouraging union membership. Now we have managers who will not be able to make a decision for the fear hanging over their heads. For example, if somebody wants to change their hours but that does not suit departmental needs—they might be looking after a patient—the reverse onus is on the employer and the manager will be constantly paralysed in doing their job. That is not going to increase productivity. It is certainly not going to encourage good relationships. I do not think that anyone will want to take on a manager's job.

At the end of the day, we now know from all of these pieces of legislation that this is a government that is beholden to the unions. I want to give the House another example as to why this government is very unsupportive of small businesses, and it is another example of their standover union thuggery tactics. In 2011, I ran for the LNP. A local ALP branch member who was a customer stopped into my shop one afternoon and said to me that the local ALP branches knew that I was running for the LNP and had spread the word to their members to boycott shopping at my store and to tell their friends and family to do the same. They are the very people who are in this place today—42 members here.

The sad thing about that is that I was in the Forest Lake electorate employing 18 local people—18 local people had a job. I was an employer putting up the risk to try to get the rewards, to service the community and to employ 18 people. These types of laws are so destructive that you are absolutely discouraging businesses. I say to the minister, who, as I said, had three years sabbatical—did not go and open up a business, has never opened up a business, has only ever taken roles in the union and became a union heavyweight. All I can say to you, Minister, is that these laws—

Ms DONALDSON: Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. The member needs to address the minister through the chair.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER (Ms Farmer): Order! I think we have had that conversation. I call the member for Mount Ommaney.

Mrs SMITH: As I said, when you have a business and you have to pay the overheads and then you have to deal with customers who do not pay their bills, that is always a risk that the employer has to take. I just have to say to you, Minister, that this legislation is a destroyer of business.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I ask the member to address her remarks through the chair.

Government members interjected.

Madam DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, members. I think we can allow the member to continue speaking.

Mrs SMITH: As I said, this legislation is a destroyer of business. This legislation is strangling confidence in the business community. I absolutely oppose this legislation.