




Speech By
Hon. Grace Grace

MEMBER FOR MCCONNEL

Record of Proceedings, 5 September 2018

MOTION

Domestic and Family Violence, Public Service Leave Provisions

 **Hon. G GRACE** (McConnel—ALP) (Minister for Education and Minister for Industrial Relations) (5.16 pm): I rise to oppose the motion, but then I hardly have to speak because even those opposite found what the member for Nicklin was saying was a bit of a joke—and it is a joke. It is cheap, political pointscoreing.

Opposition members interjected.

Ms GRACE: Come in spinners!

Mr SPEAKER: Order! Members, I want a robust debate but the debate should be through those members on their feet and those who are responding to them, not to out shout every other member in this House.

Ms GRACE: I could not be more proud of the record of the Palaszczuk Labor government in supporting the victims of domestic and family violence and working to bring an end to this terrible blight on our society. I certainly will not be lectured to by those opposite on this subject.

The Palaszczuk government came into office with a clear and principled position of supporting an entitlement of 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave for all employees—and we have acted on that. As Minister for Industrial Relations, I was proud that Queensland then led the way by being the first state to put this entitlement into law as part of a raft of significant new protections for workers in the state jurisdiction under the Industrial Relations Act 2016—legislation that those opposite voted against. Here they are wanting to protect the victims and they voted against paid domestic violence leave. They opposed it. Isn't it ironic that that they are in here today making out that they are for the victim? It is unbelievable. No, I take that back—it is disgraceful.

In doing so, we delivered on the recommendation of the bipartisan *Not now, not ever* report by Dame Quentin Bryce for a 10 days paid leave entitlement for victims of domestic and family violence. As I said when introducing that legislation, just as our workplace laws support workers with leave entitlements in circumstances where they are sick or when their family are sick or when they lose a loved one, those workers experiencing domestic and family violence need and deserve the same type of help to support them in those most desperate of times.

The entitlement in the Industrial Relations Act, however, only extends to workers in the state industrial relations jurisdiction. The federal government need to step up and amend the Fair Work Act to make 10 days paid domestic and family violence leave available to all workers in Queensland and across the country, but they have done nothing. Instead, they now propose belatedly an entitlement of five days unpaid leave—and it simply does not go far enough. We can do better than this, as a community and as a nation.

The report from Dame Quentin Bryce emphasised the importance of a paid leave entitlement to ensure that those affected by DFV are given—

An opposition member: For victims.

Ms GRACE: Then support the paid leave—which you didn't. I take that interjection from the member for Caloundra.

Mr SPEAKER: Minister, you will put your comments through the chair.

Ms GRACE: I take the interjection from the member for Caloundra and I ask that he support 10 days paid leave. Those affected by domestic and family violence need practical economic support if they are absent from work or need time to seek other forms of support for themselves and their family. If those opposite are serious about helping victims of domestic and family violence, they should get on the phone to their mates in Canberra and make this a priority.

I have some further points to make in regard to this motion which I am not supporting. While our absolute focus and priority is on the victims of domestic and family violence, the sad reality but the reality nonetheless is that in order to do our very best to help the victims of domestic and family violence we also may need initiatives in place for perpetrators so that we start to break the cycle of violence. That is what the experts tell us. That is what the victims tell us. They just want the violence to stop, and to do that we need to use every tool at our disposal.

That is why the COAG domestic violence summit in October 2016 suggested the extension of workplace responses to support perpetrators seeking to change their behaviour. As an employer of choice we listen to the experts—not those opposite—and, under the very strict guidelines outlined by the Minister for Women, if providing some form of leave to just one perpetrator means that one less woman is subject to this violence and breaks the DV cycle then that is a good outcome. For example, as Jacque Lachmund from Australia's CEO Challenge said today, 'If providing paid leave to those who use power and control in their relationships prevents further harm, then that is a success.' That is what the experts are saying. As DVConnect says, 'This is a proactive way of holding those who use violence accountable for their actions in a way that best supports their victims.' These are terribly difficult, distressing issues to deal with. My heart goes out to those victims, but these are cheap political headlines that do nothing to end the cycle of domestic and family violence.

(Time expired)