




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BONNEY

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ADJOURNMENT

Parliamentary Democracy

 **Mr O'CONNOR** (Bonney—LNP) (7.17 pm): To most Queenslanders our parliamentary democracy seems normal. It makes sense. It works—to poorly paraphrase—better than any other approach. Too many people take it for granted though. For us here we are incredibly lucky to not only sit in this room as representatives, but to have the system of government that allows us to do that.

I had a very real reminder of that luck from Dominic, a young man interning in my office. Dom is from Hong Kong. He is a brilliant Griffith University student studying urban planning, making the most of the opportunities he has while in Australia. For the last few months I have seen his rising fear and frustration as he has kept me updated with what is happening back home. Every day he comes in and he says, 'Sam, have you read this? Have you seen what is happening now?' He messages me political cartoons and articles about protesters who have been injured or killed.

The proposed extradition bill has given many residents of Hong Kong real concerns that people would be extradited to China to face judgement without an independent judiciary. This could open the door to citizens being prosecuted for political reasons, such as criticism of the ruling Chinese Communist Party. Although the bill has been suspended, until it is completely off the table these protests will likely continue, with an extraordinary over two million people of a population of seven million having joined in so far.

Violence in any form from any side is never acceptable. It is why that mace sits in front of us: it is a reminder of a time gone by where we did use violence. Now we have our fights in this place using words.

Only around half of the states in the world are called democracies and the trend is going in the wrong direction. In the past year, the democracy index shows that 89 countries have been downgraded since the previous year, which is three times those that have been upgraded. Dom says that for the people of Hong Kong this is a matter of wanting more freedom and stability. He put it in these words—

Hongkongers are busy people. In these two months, their days are like: wake up—check the news, fight, go to sleep, fight in their dreams, and then wake up to check the news to make sure everyone is safe.

There are others like Dom who live here but call Hong Kong their home. Their hearts are breaking and they are angry with the tragic events happening there.

I proudly represent many Chinese people, many of whom have come here because of the opportunity our country offers. I know these events are affecting them in different ways and that there is not just one view on this issue. However, my hope is for all in Hong Kong to be safe, to be heard and to be free.