



Speech By
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MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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APPROPRIATION (PARLIAMENT) BILL (NO. 3)

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BETTING TAX AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mrs GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (4.11 pm): Today we are debating the Treasurer's overspend bill—a bill that shows the highest overspend since the blowouts in the dying years of the Bligh government. It speaks volumes about Labor's approach to financial management. The state government is asking for approval for a whopping \$2.8 billion in taxpayers' money. To put that into perspective, this year's overspend is more than five times greater than previous unforeseen expenditure from the 2012-15 financial years—I repeat: more than five times.

This is a massive overspend and it tells us all we need to know about Labor's wasteful spending and wrong priorities. Let us talk about two of the biggest wrong priorities of this Labor government: the Treasurer's renters tax and now the GP patient tax. Unbelievably, instead of taking steps to fix the health crisis, the state government is backing a payroll tax that will see our hardworking GPs slugged with bills running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars, which inevitably will be passed on to patients and could spell the end of bulk-billing in Queensland. That will affect every single Queenslander who uses bulk-billing at their local doctor's practice. I can tell the House right now that it will not ease the strain on our doctors and nurses, it will not ease the strain on our local hospitals and it certainly will not help people dealing with cost-of-living pressures right now.

I have been inundated with messages from health practitioners pleading with me to fight the government on this GP tax. I want to read into the record the message from one GP, which states—

The morale of the medical profession is at an all-time low, including the central pillar of medical practice—that is, the general practice.

Recent activities in the Queensland parliament have been the final nail in the coffin.

There have been major enactments which will have long-term effects on general practice particularly and ultimately will trickle down to the patient.

It will have detrimental effects on health care and the health of all people.

The tax particularly the retrospective nature is nothing but a cynical money grab.

If this doctor bashing continues, we will struggle to attract good quality doctors in the future.

Medical practitioners should not be seen as a soft target for governments to keep attacking.

After almost three years of the pandemic, our hardworking GPs are at breaking point. Ultimately, this new GP tax will be a tax on patients as general practitioners will have no choice but to pass the costs on to their patients or close their doors. If that happens and if bulk-billing services are no longer available or are reduced to the point where people can no longer get a bulk-billed medical appointment,

where will patients need to go? They will go to our emergency departments! How is that going to help the health crisis? If patients are not able to get a bulk-billed medical appointment, how will that help our cost-of-living crisis?

We know that already across the state some GPs are feeling the effects of this payroll tax. They have been slugged with retrospective bills running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. In question time yesterday we asked the Treasurer if he will waive the tax bills that GPs have been slugged with. Do members know what the Treasurer said? He said he will not be acting. We asked the health minister if she will guarantee that these new tax bills will not see GPs quit and that Queenslanders will not be slugged with more to see a doctor. What did the health minister say? She said that she could not provide that guarantee.

We on this side of the House will not give up on our hardworking GPs and the Queenslanders who rely on them. We will not give up on the patients. We will continue to stand up and fight for them to reduce cost-of-living pressures and to fix our broken health system, just as we did with the Treasurer's renters tax. Despite being in a cost-of-living and housing crisis, this Treasurer is so arrogant that even, after the Premier shelved the renters tax, he has moved amendments to this overspend bill so it says he withdraws the renters tax 'at this time'. Why has he carefully worded that amendment? To leave the door open to bringing the tax back! 'At this time' does not mean this tax has been permanently ruled out. In fact, it means that if Labor is re-elected in 2024 then the first thing this Treasurer will do will be to reintroduce the tax. His reluctance to rule out this bad policy tells us everything. His reluctance to rule out the bad policy around the GP tax tells us everything. We will not rest until we get these bad policies ruled out.

We have a Treasurer who is hell-bent on defending the indefensible and a third-term Labor government that is at war with itself and no longer governs in the interests of Queenslanders. Queenslanders deserve so much better than this state Labor government. Our GPs deserve so much better. They have had enough of Labor's taxes.