




Speech By
Tim Mander

MEMBER FOR EVERTON

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INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MANDER** (Everton—LNP) (6.36 pm): I rise to speak on the Industrial Relations and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022. This is my 11th year as a member of the Queensland parliament, and I am sad to say that aspects of this bill are the most egregious I have seen in the last 10½ years. It is at times like this—and I cannot believe I am saying this—that I wish Queensland had an upper house, because I think it is the only way you would block this type of radical legislation from entering our parliament. The Labor Party abolished the upper house 100 years ago.

The goal of wiping out unions that compete against those that support the Labor Party strikes at the very heart of our democracy. One of the bedrocks of our democracy is freedom of association, and this bill will take that fundamental right away from thousands of Queenslanders who have made the choice of whom they want to represent them industrially. This is a policy that communist China would be proud of. If this bill is passed we should no longer call the member for Inala Premier Palaszczuk: we should call her 'Chairman Palaszczuk'.

Mr BROWN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I would ask that the member use proper titles, please.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Everton, the Chief Government Whip does have a point. Please refer to members by their correct titles.

Mr MANDER: Thank you for your guidance, Mr Deputy Speaker. This government is no stranger to undermining the democratic processes in this state. We all know, as has been mentioned by many members beforehand, that they changed the voting system with 18 minutes notice. They target a section of the community that contributes to the prosperity of this state and say they cannot be part of the democratic process by donating to a political party. This just adds to the undermining of the democratic process.

In another smack in the eye for due process, the original review did not provide any opportunity for public submission, meaning that consultation was limited to registered unions and other entities which would support the review's predetermined outcome.

Mr Stevens: It was run by Linda Lavarch.

Mr MANDER: I take that interjection from the member for Mermaid Beach. Who were the reviewers? Labor luminaries—Linda Lavarch and John Thompson. How could anybody on that side of the House say that is an unbiased review? It was limited in terms of who could make submissions and the people making the review were Labor Party acolytes. It is an absolute embarrassment. If it was not so serious, it would be funny. You cannot make this up. Why is the government introducing this erosion of democracy legislation into the Queensland parliament? Let me give a few suggestions. The first is that union membership in this country—

Mr Stevens: Twelve per cent.

Mr MANDER: It is actually 14 per cent; I checked the latest ABS census. Union membership in this country is 14 per cent, and Queensland is actually a little higher at 15.7 per cent. This is the only state that has increased union membership in the last six years—with an increase of 0.3 per cent—and why do we think that happened?

Mr Stevens: 60,000 reasons.

Mr MANDER: Thank you very much, member for Mermaid Beach. That is exactly why there has been an increase in membership. Here is the figure that really resonates: the figure 30 years ago in 1992 was 40 per cent. Back then, 40 per cent of Australians were a member of a union and now that rate has gone down across the country to 14 per cent. What a rapid lack of confidence in the trade union movement. What an amazing deterioration of relevance that workers see in the trade union movement. If the public sector were taken out, they would be single figures. One of the reasons this bill is being introduced is that these Labor Party aligned unions need every bit of help they can get for their survival. If these unions were effective, they would not need this type of protection.

The second reason this bill has been introduced in my opinion is that, as we all know, the Australian Labor Party is the political arm of the trade union movement. Every Labor MP is a trade union member. Every Labor MP is in their seat because the trade union movement tapped them on the shoulder and said, 'You're one of the chosen ones.' Every Labor Party member takes their direction from the trade union movement. Every Labor Party MP is a puppet of the trade union movement. When the trade union movement says that they want something, Labor are obliged to act, they have no choice.

Incredibly, the *Courier-Mail* this year named the most influential Queenslander, and it was some bloke who most Queenslanders would have no idea who he is. We know who he is and those people over there know who he is. Gary Bullock, head of the United Workers Union, is the one who calls the shots. When the Premier is asked questions, he is the one they talk about: 'What does Gary think?' That is what happens: what does Gary think? What the unions want, the unions get.

Mr Brown: Who is he?

Mr MANDER: I will take that interjection from the member for Capalaba because he knows who he is: 'Yes, Gary. Yes, sir. No, sir. Whatever you say, Gary. Do you want your shoes cleaned, Gary? I'll do whatever it takes to stay in my seat, Gary.' That is how it works. This bill is the closest this state will come to institutionalised corruption. That is what this is. This assures that the Labor Party's coffers continue to be filled by trade union fees.

The third reason this bill has been introduced in my opinion is that this government hates competition. When those who support the government cannot compete, their puppets legislate against their competitors, and the competitors' union—

Mr Stevens: \$400.

Mr MANDER: The member for Mermaid Beach is very insightful tonight, and I will take his interjection once again. If the unions did not charge so much, if the unions represented their members better, if the unions did not donate to the Labor Party, this legislation would not be necessary. This is the type of bill that is introduced by a third-term government when they know they will not be here after 2024. This is a classic example of overreach. I will go so far as to say this: this is the state Labor government's version of Howard's WorkChoices, and it will come back and bite them.

There is another issue in this bill and it relates to priorities. While mothers recover from botched surgeries in Mackay, while mothers cannot have babies in Gladstone, while ambulance ramping is at record highs and while criminals run free because of failures in forensic testing, what does this government focus its attention on? It focuses its attention on enshrining some sort of political correctness by insisting on gender neutral language in matters that do not require it.

Honourable members interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr Lister): Pause the clock. There are too many interjections. It is too loud. It is a spirited debate and I do not want to stifle it, but please take a chill pill.

Mr MANDER: I was talking about priorities. This government focuses its attention on enshrining political correctness. There is no need to change the term 'maternity leave' to 'long birth-related leave' nor to remove the pronoun 'her' when it relates to maternity leave. The section this bill most significantly removes all gender specific language for is section 63, which is entirely about a pregnant employee. It is not talking about a partner or a surrogate parent; it is the pregnant employee and that means we are talking about females. Why are we embarrassed by that? Females have maternity leave, males have

paternity leave, and 'her' is related to maternity. Why is there so much confusion? We have these ridiculous emails being sent by government employees with pronouns on the bottom about his and him and her and she. I tell you what: I am 'mate' and I am 'bloke' because I am a man and we should not be embarrassed by that. If you have any decency, vote against this bill.

Mrs McMahon interjected.

Mr Harper interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: I warn the members for Macalister and Thuringowa under the standing orders. Before I call the member for Mount Ommaney, I would like to draw the House's attention to the presence in the gallery of student leaders from Kenmore State High School in the electorate of Moggill. You are most welcome here.