




Speech By
Rob Molhoek

MEMBER FOR SOUTHPORT

Record of Proceedings, 24 August 2023

CHILD PROTECTION (OFFENDER REPORTING AND OFFENDER PROHIBITION ORDER) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr MOLHOEK** (Southport—LNP) (5.06 pm): That was a lovely speech from the member for Thuringowa, but can I say that using the concept of urgency in dealing with matters is a pretty poor excuse for poor legislative processes. In this last term of government, we have seen our debate times guillotined, we have seen family friendly hours introduced and we have been subjected to secrecy or privacy provisions of committee meetings where we are not allowed to talk about things outside the committee.

When I was first elected, a lot of people said to me, 'Rob, how do you put up with being in parliament for all those hours listening to all of those long speeches? Surely that must become boring after a while.' I will be honest that sometimes it is a tad boring, but I always reply with this: 'I respect the process.' The fact that we all have an opportunity to get up and speak about the things that are in our heart and on our mind and that represent our constituency goes to the core of what a democracy is. That goes to the core of every person in this House having an opportunity to speak their mind and enjoy the fundamental principle of freedom of speech.

What we have seen with the introduction of all these amendments is an absolute disgrace. They have been rushed in. They have absolutely nothing to do with the overall intent or spirit of the legislation. As many of my colleagues on this side of the House have said, we absolutely support the need for tougher provisions around offender reporting and offender prohibition orders in respect of child protection, but to just dump all of these other amendments in on top of child safety legislation in my view is absolutely appalling. It is disrespectful. It treats an entire sector of hardworking people who have advocated for child safety reform for decades—and it has been decades—with incredible disrespect.

I am conscious of the fact that I only have about 90 seconds and then I am going to get guillotined, so I will not even have an opportunity to say my full piece. I want to add my thanks to people like Bruce and Denise Morcombe who have been incredible advocates for child safety issues. I want to acknowledge Carol Ronken from Bravehearts who made a submission that was principally in support of this legislation. I note that Carol now celebrates 20 years of working with Bravehearts as an advocacy officer and a primary researcher. She should be very proud of her contribution because over that 20 years she has been the driving force and the source of all information which has seen significant child safety reform in every single state of Australia and the Commonwealth, including here in Queensland.

I support the child protection offender legislation, but I am so disappointed that these other amendments have been shoved in with no opportunity for us to respond and no real opportunity for public scrutiny. While I appreciate there may be some urgency, urgency often comes about because people fail to plan in the first place.