




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR GREENSLOPES

Record of Proceedings, 10 September 2024

RESPECT AT WORK AND OTHER MATTERS AMENDMENT BILL; CRIMINAL JUSTICE LEGISLATION (SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND OTHER MATTERS) AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr KELLY** (Greenslopes—ALP) (8.29 pm): I rise to support both of these bills in the cognate debate. I will start with the Respect at Work and Other Matters Amendment Bill. I started my working life in the 1980s, and the workplace in those days was not characterised by what you might call respect at work. We have taken great strides in a whole range of ways to try to improve things since those days and I see this bill as taking bigger steps in relation to that. As a union delegate I supported many people who were impacted by sexual harassment and racial vilification and even people who were targeted for not being members of a union, or being members of a union, and in all of those cases people were extremely distressed by these situations. They are completely and extremely damaging, so the steps in this bill that seek to improve our operations in workplaces in relation to these matters are welcome and worthwhile supporting.

I have listened to the concerns raised in this debate tonight, particularly in relation to religious matters, and there are a couple of things that I want to discuss in relation to that. Voltaire visited London and came back to France with a view of pluralism and suggested that, from that point on, rather than having one religious view dominate perhaps one of the best ways for a harmonious society was to tolerate other views, and that was groundbreaking stuff at the time. From the point of view of survival of our species, protecting people's rights to explore their thoughts and to develop their beliefs is fundamentally important because all of those steps that people have taken around exploring metaphysical and physical ideas and other ideas has led to all of the advancements that we have seen across a whole range of human endeavours.

I think it is incredibly important that we protect those things, but I believe that we also have to balance that against people's beliefs where they start to impact on other people in society. We have seen horrific things occur where people have forced their religious beliefs onto other people. Just this morning I was watching the ABC and there was a report on what the Taliban is doing in Afghanistan. Women are not only no longer allowed to show their face; they are no longer allowed to be heard in public. That is an extreme case which I am sure nobody in this place supports, but it seeks to demonstrate why there is a need to think about how beliefs need to be regulated if they are going to impact on the broader society, and I think that is what this bill is attempting to do.

In my view, if you study enough history, I actually think religious groups have been the victims of a great deal of persecution and vilification for their beliefs, so I believe that this sort of legislation provides protection against the very things that people are railing against here. This is attempting to strike that balance, saying, 'Within your communities, within yourself and within your soul, explore, believe, think what you like, but we have to think about what that means if you move beyond your sphere and the impacts that you have broadly in society.' I do support these bills. I do not see people crawling off into caves and not being able to practise their beliefs or teach their children as they see fit. We simply

do not live in a totalitarian state like the Taliban are running in Afghanistan—we will not be controlling people to that level—but where people step beyond the mark and are impacting on other people in society I believe we have legislative obligations to try to regulate that.

I turn now to the Criminal Justice Legislation (Sexual Violence and Other Matters) Amendment Bill 2024. This week I had the great pleasure of contacting the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation to congratulate it because it received a \$100,000 community benefit gambling fund grant which it is going to use to roll out its whole program into 72 schools across Queensland—a program aimed at helping young people to identify the signs of coercive control and to stop it. That is a great thing.

I really am very appreciative of the work in this particular bill in relation to victim-survivors and I acknowledge the Attorney-General here tonight. I have to say that I have lived a pretty charmed life in that I did not have much experience or exposure to domestic violence before being elected to parliament, and I was shocked when I went to the Holland Park courthouse to see victims being separated from those people accused of assaulting them by a very small partition that they could lean over. That was very far from an ideal situation. That was quite a number of years ago—nearly eight or nine years ago—and I am pleased to say that the Attorney-General was very sympathetic and we were able to get some other arrangements in place so that there is much better protection for those victim-survivors. The measures that are in this bill that improve things for victim-survivors are certainly welcomed and very much supported.

I often reflect on the work of Sue and Lloyd Clarke and the Small Steps 4 Hannah Foundation and the amazing achievements they have managed to pull off. The input they have had into the taskforce that led to this legislation is quite significant, so I am certainly happy to see that we are continually trying to update and improve and really say 'not now, not ever' to domestic violence. I commend the bills to the House.