




Speech By
Hon. Laura Gerber

MEMBER FOR CURRUMBIN

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**DOMESTIC AND FAMILY VIOLENCE PROTECTION AND OTHER LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT BILL**

 **Hon. LJ GERBER** (Currumbin—LNP) (Minister for Youth Justice and Victim Support and Minister for Corrective Services) (10.11 pm): Terror, violence, control—that is what thousands of women live with every single day. This bill is for them. It is for the woman who jumps at the slammed door and keeps a phone under her pillow; for the woman who wonders if today will be her last; for the survivors who found the courage to seek help only to be retraumatised by the system; for the woman who has been isolated from her family and friends; for the children who deserve a safe home; and for the woman who has been subjected to violence. We heard shadow ministers stand up in this House and in their contribution to this debate, a debate that is about protecting women from violence, excuse the behaviour of the member for Cairns by saying he has been counselled so there is nothing to see here. He has been counselled so we can stand by and walk past this behaviour—nothing to see here. That is the culture of the Labor Party. They think that it is okay; that he has been counselled so there is nothing to see here. In the same breath the member for Bulimba talked about standing up—

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr Minnikin interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER (Mr McDonald): Member for Bulimba and member for Chatsworth, there will be no cross-chamber chatter or yelling. Next time it will be a warning.

Mrs GERBER: Being counselled is the consequence for the behaviour of men on the Labor side of parliament who continue to talk about violence against women as a joke, as a funny one-liner. The consequence for them is they were counselled; everything is okay, there is nothing to see here. They have made these statements in a debate that is meant to be about protecting women and children from violence. It is absolutely mind blowing that they think that it is acceptable.

Ms Farmer interjected.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Bulimba, you are warned.

Mrs GERBER: This bill is for every Queenslanders who has lived in fear of their family or a partner. I want to address the comments of the shadow minister for women in relation to consent. The shadow minister for women drew an analogy to try to justify her amendments requiring police to have consent to issue a PPD. She tried to justify her amendments by saying the male perpetrator might need to come back home after a night shift and watch his kids. Oh my goodness! Those children deserve to be protected too, shadow minister for women. That is how Labor treat victims of domestic and family violence. I am going to read a comment from a submitter to the committee, because the shadow minister for women needs to hear this. One submitter said—

I had a school friend come over and she asked, 'Why is your dad bashing your mum?' I told her, 'They're just fighting.' It was normal for me, but she hadn't seen that before.

The shadow minister for women is happy for a male perpetrator to come home and continue to do it, on the basis of her amendments.

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I find that highly offensive and I ask her to withdraw.

Mrs GERBER: I withdraw. The fact remains that the shadow minister for women gave an example to justify her amendments in relation to consent and the example was that the male perpetrator who works a night shift might need to come home and look after the kids, the same children that could be subjected to the domestic violence in that house.

Ms Fentiman: Talk to the Gold Coast domestic violence service, Minister.

Mrs GERBER: Do not listen to the other submitters that talk about it, no. Let us not listen to everyone else, let us just cherrypick. Our Domestic and Family Violence Protection and Other Legislation Amendment Bill delivers three major reforms. First, it establishes police protection directions. These give frontline officers the power to act decisively, to offer 12 months of immediate protection for Queenslanders in danger, women and children in danger; protection that can mean the difference between safety and tragedy. Second, the bill launches the Crisafulli government's election commitment to trial electronic monitoring of high-risk domestic and family violence perpetrators. Our message is clear: these high-risk perpetrators will be trapped, they will be monitored and they will be held accountable because victim-survivors should not have to live in fear of their abuser's next move. Third, this bill strengthens the ability for victim-survivors to give their evidence in a way that minimises any further trauma. Expanding videorecorded evidence across the state means fewer survivors will have to relive their trauma in a court to bring their offender to justice. I note one of the trial sites for this is the Coolangatta courthouse in my own electorate of Currumbin.

These critical reforms are about restoring power to those who have been stripped of it by the people who they trusted to love them. I want to take a moment to thank each of the submitters who took time to share their lived experience. It was their input and courage that informed the recommendations of the committee and their stories really did leave a mark on me. Sadly, we know that the reality is that too many Queensland children grow up with violence in the home. We know violence in the home should never be normal. It should never be accepted. We do not accept it, unlike the shadow minister for women who used it as an excuse to justify why PPDs should have to have consent.

Ms FENTIMAN: Mr Deputy Speaker, I rise to a point of order. I once again take personal offence. The minister continues to misunderstand what I said and misunderstand the experience of victim-survivors and I ask her to withdraw.

Mr DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Do you withdraw?

Mrs GERBER: I withdraw, but I direct the shadow minister for women to look at *Hansard*, because it is pretty clear what she said. The reforms in this bill are important for victim-survivors. For too long under Labor victims of domestic and family violence were left waiting hours, or even longer than that—days—for help. Sometimes that help never came. In fact, in the last decade under Labor calls for service to domestic and family violence surged by 218 per cent. Under Labor, the system was left to buckle under its strain. We saw a decade of decline under Labor. This government is taking decisive action to protect women and children from domestic and family violence. We are committed to restoring safety where you live and putting the victims of crime first by holding perpetrators to account. This bill is just another way that we are doing that.

Police protection directions will ensure victims do not have to wait. They will deliver 12 months of immediate protection. That means that when a woman calls for help, police will not just take a report, they will be able to take action that very same day to keep her safe and the children who might be in that house safe. These directions are about protection. They are enforceable, they are immediate and they are reflective of the serious nature of an offender's actions. They can compel good behaviour, prohibit contact and prevent offenders from using others to continue their abuse. It sends a clear message to perpetrators: if you choose violence there will be consequences, unlike the member for Cairns whose consequence was his being counselled.

A government member: Not cancelled.

Mrs GERBER: I take the interjection—not cancelled. He has just been counselled. The second major reform of this bill is the GPS electronic monitoring pilot for high-risk perpetrators. For too long the burden of safety has been on the victim. For too long she has had to change her name, her number, find a new home—live in hiding. The Crisafulli government is flipping that burden. We are putting the responsibility on the perpetrator where it belongs.

Under our legislation, high-risk offenders will be tracked and monitored. They will know that the law is watching and that their movements are being scrutinised. As part of our pilot, 150 devices will remain available to selected courts, and victim-survivors themselves will have the option to carry a GPS enabled safety device, putting another layer of reassurance in their hands. This provides victims with a tangible opportunity to regain control. Most importantly, the technology is not standalone. It is designed to complement safety planning that has been undertaken by specialist domestic and family violence services. This pilot is about strengthening the system around the victim.

The third reform is the expansion of videorecorded evidence-in-chief across Queensland. This is a victim's firsthand account of what happened. It is critically important to ensure that victims are not retraumatised by what they have been going through. In fact, many victim-survivors submitted to the committee that they found reliving their experiences in a courtroom just as traumatising as the violence itself. This reform changes that for victims.

In the time that I have left, I want to acknowledge the Red Rose Foundation. Tomorrow outside this parliament they will gather to honour a victim whose life was taken over the weekend through domestic and family violence. Her name was Carra Luke. Her life mattered. She will be remembered.

Domestic and family violence is a scourge in our community and has absolutely no place in Queensland. The Crisafulli government will continue to take decisive action to protect women, to protect children and to protect Queenslanders from domestic and family violence. Through our reforms involving perpetrators, PPDs and GPS monitoring and by not retraumatising victims, we are taking just one step towards delivering that for Queenslanders.