



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRIVILEGE**

**SPEECH**

**Tuesday, 24 February 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Tuesday, 24 February 2009  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Pyne, Chris, MP

**Source** House  
**Proof** No  
**Responder**  
**Question No.**

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt) (3.40 pm)—Mr Speaker, under standing order 51, I wish to raise a matter of privilege. This is the first opportunity I have had to raise it since the member for Hinkler brought to my attention a specific instance of his privilege being breached due to the actions of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister for Education. I am raising it on behalf of the coalition because I wrote to the Speaker about this matter Thursday week ago. The Speaker returned my letter and I am happy to table—in fact I will table without any leave being required—the letter I wrote to the Speaker on 11 February, the letter I wrote to the Deputy Prime Minister on 11 February, her letter to members and the outrageous questionnaire that she also sent out, the 2007 guidelines for Investing in Our Schools and the 2008 guidelines for Investing in Our Schools.

The Speaker returned my correspondence today indicating that he wished to have a specific instance where a member had been unable to carry out their duties as a member of parliament because of the change of guidelines and the potential breach of privilege. It is the view of the opposition and my own view that the participation ticking box requirement of the Deputy Prime Minister and the changes to the Investing in Our Schools guidelines are a breach of the privileges of the House. They are unprecedented, and they have been changed. I ask you respectfully under standing order 51 to consider the submissions—

**Mr Albanese**—What about your flagpoles?

**Mr PYNE**—The guidelines were changed, Mr clever Leader of the House. The guidelines that I am tabling today make it absolutely clear—and I am happy to point out in the submissions to you, Mr Speaker, that the guidelines were changed in Investing in Our Schools to require that a member of the Australian Labor Party be given precedence in the opening of all Investing in Our Schools programs. That was not the case under the Howard government. The new guidelines require that the department be the people who run the events at schools and they require that the school should not invite the member or their local member directly. It is the first time; those guidelines are unprecedented.

They go on to say, ‘In 2008 an Australian government representative is a member of the Australian Labor Party.’ Putting aside the question of whether this is a breach of the Public Service Act—requiring that members of the Public Service be members of the Australian Labor Party—I do make the submission to you, Mr Speaker, that this is a breach of privilege. I ask you to consider giving precedence to a motion to refer this to the Privileges Committee forthwith.