



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

**SOCIAL SECURITY AND OTHER
LEGISLATION AMENDMENT (INCOME
SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS) BILL 2009**

Consideration in Detail

SPEECH

Tuesday, 27 October 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

Date Tuesday, 27 October 2009
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Questioner
Speaker Gillard, Julia, MP

Source House
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Ms GILLARD (Lalor—Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion) (6.15 pm)—It is not my intention to delay the House and I understand that it would suit the convenience of the House to have any divisions before 6.30 pm. For the reasons I gave in my summing up, obviously the government will not be supporting these amendments. There was a transition issue and that transition issue was for people who had commenced to make arrangements about GAP years, for example, before the announcement of the government's changes on budget night. That transition issue has already been dealt with by the government in this bill. The government does not support a permanent rip-off of scholarship money out of the hands of students, and that is what this amendment is all about.

To take the House back to basics, I remind members that, if it had not been for the election of the Rudd government, we would not have had the Bradley review. If it had not been for the election of the Rudd government, we would have seen a continuation of the student financing system that was seeing country kids and poorer kids go out backwards, while some kids living at home in families with incomes of more than \$300,000 benefited. Everybody is now saying, apparently—according to the shadow minister—that everybody understands that that is the wrong system. It strikes me as passing strange that the Liberal Party—now conceding that that was the wrong system—year after year in government did not do anything about it. It fell to this government to have the Bradley review, it fell to this government to introduce this bill in the name of equity, it fell to this government to finance higher education and put it on a growth path, and it fell to this government to put money into the system so that universities have an incentive to enrol kids from disadvantaged backgrounds. They are the reforms that we are seeking support for, and, when the bill moves from this place to the Senate, they are the reforms that we will stand by.

If there are students next year who do not get their scholarship money because of a belligerent display by the opposition, who did not have the wit in government to make a difference for kids going to university, then the opposition will be judged by it. The Australian people passed a verdict about the Liberal Party in 2007 and they passed a verdict about the Liberal Party in part on its track record of failures in education. It falls to the Liberal Party at forthcoming elections to try and seek to regain the confidence of the Australian people on those questions, but I would say to the Liberal Party and to the coalition generally: it is no way to try seeking that confidence by blocking much needed equity based reforms like this one; it is no point trying to seek that confidence by punching a \$700 million hole, a permanent hole that rips scholarship money out of the hands of students; and that is the course that the coalition is on.

Question put:

That the motion (**Mr Pyne's**) be agreed to.