



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

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

**Consideration of Senate Message**

**SPEECH**

**Wednesday, 18 November 2009**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

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| <b>Date</b> Wednesday, 18 November 2009 | <b>Source</b> House |
| <b>Page</b> 12039                       | <b>Proof</b> No     |
| <b>Questioner</b>                       | <b>Responder</b>    |
| <b>Speaker</b> Gillard, Julia, MP       | <b>Question No.</b> |

**Ms GILLARD** (Lalor—Minister for Education, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations and Minister for Social Inclusion) (12.34 pm)—I would like to indicate to the House that the government proposes that amendments (1) and (2) be agreed to and that amendments (3) to (9) be disagreed to. I suggest, therefore, that it may suit the convenience of the House first to consider amendments (1) and (2) and, when those amendments have been disposed of, to consider amendments (3) to (9). I move:

That Senate amendments Nos 1 and 2 be agreed to.

These are two amendments that originated from the Australian Greens in the Senate last night. The government has had an opportunity to consider these two amendments and is disposed to agree to them. The first amendment is a call for a review. The government has in fact already agreed to implement a triennial review of student income support legislation as part of its Transforming Australia's Higher Education System budget response. Accordingly, whilst we think the amendment from the Australian Greens that puts this requirement in legislation is redundant, we are happy to accept the amendment. Indeed, we are very much going to welcome a review because we expect that it will tell us the same thing as the analysis that has driven these changes—that is, they will be good for students from poorer households, from low-SES households, and good for students from rural and regional Australia.

Amendment (2) is also an amendment from the Australian Greens. It is a move to have the government administer the new workforce participation criteria by averaging the 30-hour requirement rather than requiring that students work at least 30 hours per week. It had been the intention of the government, through administrative arrangements, to permit some averaging. Consequently, we believe that this amendment can be accepted and managed through the administrative arrangements we had already determined upon in a budget-neutral way. This will be done by averaging over periods of up to 13 weeks. This will accommodate situations where young people do not work 30 hours consistently every week, provided that their employment can be genuinely characterised as full time in nature. This approach will ensure that young people with a history of sustained full-time employment should be recognised as self-supporting for youth allowance purposes. It is on that basis that we can accept the amendment. So those two amendments as moved by the Australian Greens in the Senate and numbered (1) and (2) on the document before the House will be accepted by the government.

Question agreed to.