



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

**PRIVILEGE**

**SPEECH**

**Monday, 26 May 2014**

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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## SPEECH

**Date** Monday, 26 May 2014  
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**Questioner**  
**Speaker** Pyne, Christopher, MP

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

**Mr PYNE** (Sturt—Leader of the House and Minister for Education) (15:36): It is disappointing to be lectured by the Labor Party on any matter to do with the speakership of the parliament and particularly today of all days when on the front page of *The Daily Telegraph* the member for Watson has been exposed as writing a letter calling for consideration to be given to releasing a convicted drug trafficker Mr Nweke into community detention.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: What is the point of order?

**Ms Plibersek**: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I would ask you to reconsider the statement that you made about—

The SPEAKER: There is no point of order. I have sat here and accepted the words that were said about me. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Ms Plibersek**: You have questioned his morality and you have engaged in debate when you should not.

The SPEAKER: The deputy leader will resume her seat. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr PYNE**: You just do not know how to behave, do you member for Rankin, member for Lingiari, Deputy Leader of the Opposition? It is just extraordinary. You have no manners at all.

Opposition members interjecting—

The SPEAKER: The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr Bowen**: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The SPEAKER: If this is meant to disrupt debate—

**Mr Bowen**: No it is not.

The SPEAKER: Then I will accept the point of order.

**Mr Bowen**: I have a point of order on two grounds: firstly, you clearly intervened and participated in the debate; secondly, you clearly reflected on a member of this House. Any one of us would have been asked to withdraw and would have. You should comply, with respect, with the same rules that apply to every other member. Very clearly, you should withdraw that comment.

The SPEAKER: Except me, apparently. The Leader of the House has the call.

**Mr PYNE**: The opposition has moved this motion about whether the Speaker's use of her Parliament House dining room for Liberal Party fundraisers constitutes an improper interference with the operations of the House of Representatives. The first point the government would make is that we will not be supporting this motion under any circumstances. The reason we will not be supporting this motion is that this is a motion about smear and innuendo directed at the Speaker's office. Smear and innuendo are the Labor Party's first weapon of choice; it always has been and continues to be so. Smarting from their election defeat last September, from the moment that you were elected, Madam Speaker, the Labor Party has been trying to smear you, denigrate you and traduce you in the chair. On the very first day, the Manager of Opposition Business called you a witch, Madam Speaker. And here we are today debating the latest in the series of attempts to denigrate you as Speaker. Our opinion, on the government side of the House, is that you are upholding the role of Speaker with dignity, decorum and intelligence, as we expected when we elected you last year, Madam Speaker.

Since you have been elected Speaker, Madam Speaker, the opposition have moved dissent motions. If my memory serves me correctly, they moved a dissent motion the first day that you were appointed Speaker. It was one of many dissent motions. They moved a no-confidence motion against you at the end of the last sitting of parliament and now, on the flimsiest of pretexts, the Labor Party have moved a motion accusing you of misusing your position as Speaker because you held a dinner in the Speaker's dining rooms. As you pointed out, Madam Speaker, fundraisers occur in this building all the time. And as long as those fundraisers are paid for either personally or by the political party that a member represents, they in no way breach any rules of this parliament. And so instead of simply accepting that there are no rules breached—and you commented on this, Madam Speaker, this morning—the Labor Party have come into the chamber this afternoon and moved a motion that is clearly designed to smear the position of Speaker and to do another political stunt—in this case, to play the woman not the ball.

We are not going to be lectured by the party of the member for Watson, who was exposed today on the front page of the *Telegraph* as having advocated for Mr Nweke, a convicted drug smuggler. This is also the party that suborned the former member for Fisher, Peter Slipper, into selling the past and effectively joining the government by taking the Speaker's role in the last parliament, pushing Harry Jenkins, the former member for Scullin, out of the seat in order to gain one vote. This was the brilliant idea of the former Leader of the House, the member for Grayndler. In a sheer act of genius, they would, in one fell swoop, gain a vote on the floor of the parliament by bringing Harry Jenkins back to their side of the chamber and moving a member from our side of the chamber into the Speaker's chair. Unfortunately, that did not go quite as well as the then government hoped. So we are not going to be lectured by the party of Peter Slipper; we are not going to be lectured by the party of the member for Watson. That is not to even go into the stories that have come out of ICAC involving the Obeid family, Joe Tripodi, Ian Macdonald and many others over the last several years.

All of this is designed to distract the media and the public from the fact that the Labor Party have a complete paucity of policy or understanding of what is needed to be done in opposition. The Labor Party have not yet finished the grieving process of losing the election in September last year. I can understand that after six years they were shocked to have been such an incompetent and terrible government that they ended up back on the opposition benches rather than on the government benches. What they need to do now in opposition is accept defeat. They need to accept that the carbon tax is rejected and allow it to be repealed by the incoming government. They have to start developing the policy that will help them to perhaps regain the government benches over the years ahead. All of these kinds of political stunts, all of these attempts to smear the Speaker, to make the Speaker an object of political football, are all designed to distract from the fact that the opposition have no explanation for the debt and deficit disaster that they left the incoming government after September last year. So every day we will hear every other issue other than an explanation for why they were so incompetent that they were unable to leave to the new incoming government the same economic conditions that the Howard and Costello government left to the Rudd government when it came into power in 2007.

The reason we will not support this motion is that the government is not going to join in a political stunt that distracts people from Labor's paucity of ideas, from their inability to deal with their own grief having lost last year's election. We will not join in a political stunt designed to smear the Speaker and the Speaker's office. Therefore, the government will not support this motion. I think I have spoken long enough because I think the time of the House is better spent on government business. On that note, I move:

That the question be now put.