



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

BILLS

Commonwealth Electoral Amendment Bill 2016

In Committee

SPEECH

Thursday, 17 March 2016

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

SPEECH

Date Thursday, 17 March 2016	Source Senate
Page 2486	Proof No
Questioner	Responder
Speaker Collins, Sen Jacinta	Question No.

Senator JACINTA COLLINS (Victoria) (23:36): The minister well knows that it does not cover it, but perhaps I will approach this matter another way. Before I go there, I need to continue to deal with these snide remarks: 'Don't have much material', 'Doesn't have enough to do', 'I'm going to help with the Labor filibuster.' Minister, this is not a filibuster. This is the proper consideration that should have occurred for this bill in committee. I have made this point several times—that what we are doing now is having an adequate consideration that did not occur in the backroom deal with the Greens. We can revisit that several times, and I promise you, Minister, there are many other areas in general that I intend to deal with before I deal specifically with this first amendment. That said, if I need to start being creative and find ways to frame my questions in the context of the first amendment—

Senator Ludlam interjecting—

Senator JACINTA COLLINS: Senator Ludlam, I am happy to get more boring, but what this really is is your first attempt at a gag. It is somewhat bemusing, because you promised us you would not. You said—or actually the minister said—'We're here till Easter if we have to be,' and yet, when Senator Cameron is on his feet, what do you do? You try and limit him to the first amendment, because, in a discussion between Senator Di Natale and Senator Cormann, they got together and they said, 'How can we move this pace along? We've said we won't gag but what else can we do?' Seriously, it is Senate procedure 101—you are going to try and limit us to the first amendment? I can play that game if you want to, but I would rather go back to the substantive issues that the Greens did not deal with in their backroom deal, that senators and members of the House were not able to deal with in the truncated fraud of a JSCEM committee process and that do still need to be addressed.

I have other issues with how the minister has characterised the AEC's evidence, and we will get to those as well. But, before we do, we will stay on this particular issue. Minister, does it make it unlawful to encourage a person to cast an informal vote provided they are honest about the effect of informal voting? As long as someone covers the benchmark of the unanimous High Court decision in *Evans v Crichton-Browne*—so as long as they are not misleading or deceptive—they will not be prevented from encouraging someone to cast an informal vote that will be saved by the provisions in this bill?