



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



THE SENATE

**HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION
AMENDMENT (STUDENT
SERVICES AND AMENITIES, AND
OTHER MEASURES) BILL 2009**

In Committee

SPEECH

Monday, 17 August 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

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Questioner
Speaker Fielding, Sen Steve

Source Senate
Proof No
Responder
Question No.

Senator FIELDING (Victoria—Leader of the Family First Party) (9.29 pm)—Frankly, Senator Joyce's proposition is fundamentally flawed. He is trying to be half pregnant. Really, it is a joke to stand here and say: sport is in, but not arts. Whatever argument you want to make, you are drawing a line arbitrarily—frankly, you are going to be half pregnant. You either want to raise a fee compulsorily for people who want to use something or you do not—

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN (Senator Moore)—Senator Joyce on a point of order?

Senator Joyce—I am querying the term 'half pregnant'.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN—It is a debating point, Senator Joyce. Senator Fielding has the right to use the term.

Senator FIELDING—Gee, Senator Joyce, I didn't think you were that precious, mate. This is ridiculous. I am sorry, it is absolutely ridiculous. Where do you draw the line on this thing? It is a compulsory fee, mate.

The TEMPORARY CHAIRMAN—Senator Fielding, if you could address your remarks through the chair.

Senator FIELDING—There are a lot of people in Australia who do not play sport. There are a lot of people who are into the arts, who are into things other than sport. To argue the point that sports are worthy of a compulsory fee, I think, is frankly absurd. You should either argue for the whole lot to be in, like Labor are, or none at all. You cannot do this. Your principle is so ridiculous I am surprised you are not being laughed out of this thing. It is just ridiculous to think that you could say, 'Sport is in because it's the national thing.' There are plenty of people who do not follow sport. There are plenty of people who think the arts are better than sport. You can argue the next case and the next case. It is fundamentally flawed, so I cannot support it.