

## Ensuring Integrity Bill Campaign Update

July 2019

The Fair Work (Registered Organisations) Amendment (Ensuring Integrity) Bill 2019 was introduced on 4 July 2019. This is a revised version of the bill originally introduced in August 2017. The Government is claiming that the bill has been revised to more “closely align these reforms with their corporate equivalents”.

However, the bill is far more extensive and extreme in the regulation of unions than what exists for businesses or politicians. Furthermore, some of the amendments made by the Government have the potential to allow even more interference in the internal functioning of registered organisations.

This bill represents a politically motivated attack on workers’ ability to organise and represent workers, run their own union and determine who leads them.

### What’s needed to defeat the bill

The ALP and the Greens have made clear to us that they are opposed to the bill. We need to continue to reinforce with them the importance of defeating the Bill.

If the ALP and Greens oppose the bill outright, the Government needs the support of four of the six crossbench senators in order to pass the bill.

The six crossbench senators are:

- Stirling Griff and Rex Patrick (Centre Alliance, SA)
- Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts (One Nation, QLD)
- Jacqui Lambie (JLN, Tasmania)
- Corey Bernardi (formerly Australian Conservatives, SA)

For us to defeat the bill we need the support of three of the six crossbenchers. Amending the bill requires the support of four of the six.

The bill is currently before the Senate Education and Employment Legislation Committee (a Government-chaired committee) for inquiry and report. Submissions are due on 29 August 2019, after which the Committee will conduct hearings. It is due to report on 25 October 2019. The ACTU will be preparing a submission and affiliates are also urged to put in submissions to the Inquiry. Contact ACTU Industrial Officer Elyane Palmer - [epalmer@actu.org.au](mailto:epalmer@actu.org.au)

The ACTU will be coordinating lobbying of crossbench Senators. Affiliates are asked to support the effectiveness and coordination of our lobbying efforts by contacting ACTU Political director Jacqui Woods - [jwoods@actu.org.au](mailto:jwoods@actu.org.au)

## **Key messages**

To assist in explaining and describing the effect of this Bill we have developed the following key messages.

Scott Morrison is trying to bring in dangerous and extreme laws that will make it harder for workers to win pay rises and protect their jobs.

These laws will make it possible for government ministers and disgruntled employers to shut down unions and deny working people their right to choose their own representatives.

These laws are so extreme they threaten basic democratic freedoms. Only authoritarian governments interfere with the running of unions or working people's basic rights to be represented.

It is important that people are free from Government and employer interference, so they can join unions and elect representatives who fight for pay rises and to protect jobs and workplace safety.

This is about silencing working people and making it harder for all workers to win pay rises.

These laws are fundamentally unfair. They would not apply to business, not apply to banks and not apply to politicians, despite their serious unethical conduct.

### **1. Bad for workers.**

If people's rights are attacked like this, it will be harder for working people to be protected at work and to raise their living standards.

All Australian workers benefit from the work of unions. If unions are shut down or silenced, who will stand up to the powerful, make sure workers get their rights and fight to improve workers' rights?

The only people who would benefit from these laws are the Morrison Government and unethical employers.

### **2. Anti-democratic**

Australia already has one of the most restrictive set of regulations on worker's organisations among democratic nations. This extreme new law would place Australia even further outside the rest of the world and more aligned with authoritarian, undemocratic countries.

The Morrison government has overseen raids on journalists and is now attacking working people's freedom to run their own unions. These are dangerous attacks on fundamental pillars of democracy.

To balance the power of corporations and governments, people need a free press and the right to form unions whose own democratic processes are free from interference.

### **3. No corporate or political equivalent**

Scott Morrison is going after ordinary working people, 90% of whom are unpaid volunteers on management committees but ignoring what has already been discovered in banks, is being uncovered in aged care corporations and what his own ministers are doing.

We've seen countless scandals and examples of unethical behaviour from members of the Morrison government who are not held to account in anyway. And every day we see employers engaging in wage theft and people being killed at work. If these laws applied equally to corporations we would see banks, multinational pizza chains and the restaurants of celebrity chefs closed down for repeatedly breaking workplace laws and their top Executives sacked. This is not being proposed, because it would be outrageous. It is also outrageous for unions.

#### **4. All unions**

These proposed laws put the rights of millions of working people are on the line.

It is part of the Liberal Party and big business's attempts to continually attack unions because unions stand up for working people and call the government and employers to account. Union members earn on average between 14-20% more than people who are not union members.

The average union member is a 46 year old woman who is a nurse. The Morrison Government and some in business would like to paint a very different picture because unions stand up to the powerful in our country.