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LABOR COLLUSION WITH SENATOR SMITH CONFIRMS VOTING 'NO' THE ONLY WAY TO GO

Today's endorsement of the Dean Smith bill by the Labor caucus demonstrates that the only way Australians can truly protect their freedoms is to vote 'no,' the Coalition for Marriage said today.

The Smith bill is woefully insufficient to protect the rights of ordinary Australians.

"The backing of the Smith bill by the Labor caucus reveals that Labor is intent on rushing legislation through parliament without any proper consideration of the serious concerns raised by millions of Australians about how a change in the law will affect their rights," Coalition for Marriage spokesman, Lyle Shelton said.

"Forget about freedom of religion, this is freedom of speech that's not protected. The so-called religious freedom protections in the Smith bill only cover a very narrow group of Australians that are paid clergy who solemnise weddings. There are millions of other Australians who have a view on marriage and would want to speak about that publicly. But, in terms of Labor's view of the world, they won't have that freedom. That will be hate speech, and those who speak their mind will be vulnerable to be taken to a state-based anti-discrimination commission.

"The Smith bill provides no protection for parents who do not want their kids exposed to radical LGBTIQ sex and gender programs in their classrooms, which is unsurprising given that Labor also backs the Safe Schools program. It provides no protection for Christian and Muslim schools wanting to teach kids according to their faith traditions.

"The Smith bill provides no protection for people like the young Canberra girl who got fired for expressing her opinion about marriage on Facebook.

"The Smith bill would not even prevent someone like Archbishop Julian Porteous being taken back to the anti-discrimination commission in Tasmania.

"Today's ABS statistics show us that Australians have engaged with this debate at a very high level. They deserve to have their concerns taken seriously, not dismissed by those, including the Labor caucus, pushing for a change to the law.

"The bill endorsed by the Labor party does nothing to protect freedoms in this country. The only way Australians will be able to protect their freedoms is to vote 'no'," Mr Shelton concluded.

ENDS

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