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## PASSING OF SMITH BILL SHOWS DISREGARD FOR FREEDOMS

The passing of the Dean Smith bill unamended through the House of Representatives today was evidence of the disregard that many MPs have for the freedoms of Australians and the upholding of international human rights obligations, the Coalition for Marriage said today.

“It is deeply disappointing that both the Prime Minister and the Opposition Leader reneged on the assurances they gave to the Australian people during the marriage campaign,” Coalition for Marriage spokesman, Lyle Shelton said.

“The Australian people were promised that their freedom of speech, freedom of religion and parental rights would be protected in any same-sex marriage legislation, and this has not happened.

“It’s classic bait-and-switch. Australians were told that they could vote ‘yes’ and have their freedoms protected, but were given the Dean Smith bill instead.

“As a result of the parliament failing to uphold the rights and freedoms of ordinary Australians, we expect to see similar consequences for free speech, freedom of religion and parental rights as what we have seen overseas.

“We know that the appetite for punishing those who disagree with the new definition of marriage exists in Australia. We saw it before the campaign began with Archbishop Julian Porteous being dragged before an anti-discrimination tribunal for preaching to his flock. We saw it during the campaign with a young worker being fired for adding a Coalition for Marriage filter to her Facebook page. And we have seen it after the campaign ended with the obstinate refusal of politicians – even those in electorates with high ‘no’ votes – to do anything to protect freedoms.

“We are grateful to those MPs who stood by the Australian people and stood up for freedom in trying to pass some amendments through the House. Unfortunately, they were too few today.

“The Coalition for Marriage promised to stand up for the rights and freedoms of Australians, and we intend to keep doing that,” he concluded.

ENDS

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