



Police Speech – Adjournment Debate

10 November 2016

On 29 September, National Police Remembrance Day, the nation paused to remember the police officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty and to honour the members of our police force who have sworn to protect our communities.

We are indebted to these men and women who are prepared to face dangers that thankfully most of us will never have to encounter.

Therefore, I was horrified when it was reported to me that one of our number, someone given the honour to represent the community, in this place, had said he would be happy to let police "...lie on the side of the road and bleed to death"

I am advised that Senator David Leyonhjelm made these comments at a Queensland bikie law rally. His comments not only insulted 60,000 Police Officers across our nation, but those of us who support and value the work of our law enforcement community.

Senator David Leyonhjelm's words were received with nothing short of disgust.... disbelief...and horror from the thousands of serving police officers and their families.

These abhorrent, disgusting and disparaging comments were made just months after the Senator won a seat in the Australian Senate.

Recently, the Senator continues to show his contempt for police when in November 2015 he said, "The police are not our masters. They are our servants and I think they should remember that."

Further, in a parliamentary inquiry he is quoted as saying, "All cops are bastards".

Given his position as a legislator, Senator Leyonhjelm should be well aware, our police are sworn to uphold the laws made by our Parliaments, and in protecting life and property, it is our police that often are called upon to deal with the very worst aspects of human behaviours.

The primary job of police is to prevent crime and in doing so protect and support our communities.

They are normal people with families and loved ones of their own. And yet – these are the very people that Senator Leyonhjelm has singled out, degraded and abused, not the law makers and politicians like himself, but those who enforce the law.

A mother wrote on social media.....

“My daughter is a police officer. I would never say to you, your daughter should lie on the side of the road and bleed to death. You have said that to me.Police officers have mums, dads, children, wives and husbands. You have insulted us all.”

As I said earlier, National Police Remembrance Day honours those officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. There are 764 names on Canberra’s National Wall of Remembrance and every year, tragically, more names are added. All of these officers have given their lives for their community.

Clearly they have done more for this country than the Senator could ever hope to achieve.

How can someone who is supposed to represent the Australian people be so out of touch to make such outlandish statements against those who work tirelessly for the good of others and the community.

Is this what the Liberal Democratic Party stands for?

I note Senator Leyonhjelm is at the centre of the guns for vote scandal. I caution the Government that they might want to be a little more careful who they choose to horse trade with.

Clearly, Senator Leyonhjelm is a man who obviously is out of touch with the wider community and who has no respect for the work and people of our law enforcement agencies.

I would urge Senator Leyonhjelm to consider spending a shift at a police station, ride the truck on a Saturday night, attend a car crash, go to the scene of a suspicious death; inform parents that their child is never coming home.

Then, in some quiet reflection, consider whether he stands by his comments.

As one police officer wrote:

“Well Senator you may want us to "lie on the road and bleed to death" but rest assured if you need saving I'll be there for you, that's what sets us apart.....”