

Thursday, 24 November 2011

Four years to the day Australian workers voted out WorkChoices, Liberals still want it back

On the fourth anniversary of the rejection of the Howard Government's WorkChoices at the 2007 election, the Liberal Party has confirmed it is clinging to its ambition to return to those dark days, say unions.

In a speech last night, John Howard's former right hand man and now Senator Arthur Sinodinos confirmed WorkChoices was a policy the Liberals still believed in.

Senator Sinodinos used his maiden speech to Parliament, on the eve of the anniversary of the Labor Party's defeat of the Howard Government, to give what he described as a 'brief memorial service' to WorkChoices – the very laws that destroyed the rights of millions of working Australians, said ACTU President Ged Kearney said.

"It is time Tony Abbott came clean about the Liberals' industrial relations policy," Ms Kearney said.

"His continual silence is deceitful because there are plenty of his Liberal Party colleagues who are cheering for a return to WorkChoices."

In his maiden speech last night, Senator Sinodinos agreed with statements from Tony Abbott that WorkChoices did not fail because it was bad policy, but rather because: *"The truth is we failed to prepare the ground for such a major reform..."*

"The Liberal party are saying they truly believe there was nothing wrong with cutting unfair dismissal, nothing wrong with individual contracts that cut pay and conditions, nothing wrong with minimum wages going backwards. And they don't believe in a fair go.

"Mr Abbott and the Liberal Party refuse to listen to working Australians; they ignore the groundswell of support for workplace rights, for job security and for fair pay and conditions, in favour of standing up for their mates at the top end of town.

"They cannot be given another chance at Government because it is clear they will only use it to once again destroy the rights of working people."

"Mr Abbott can be silent for as long as he likes but his Liberal MPs are doing the talking for him and they are confirming that he will overturn the hard-fought rights of working Australians.

"It is time he had the decency to admit to the Australian people just what he would do if in Government. It is time he told Australians why he believes they do not deserve what is really needed in future industrial relations reforms – that is better futures through secure jobs."

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