

Wednesday 1 September 2021

Morrison Government blocks stronger workplace harassment laws.

The Morrison Government and One Nation have today voted against key structural workplace changes recommended by the Respect@Work report, ensuring that the burden is still on individual women to enter complex and lengthy complaints processes to resolve instances of sexual harassment and violence in the workplace at their own cost and risk.

The decision by the Government to oppose amendments developed by Labor and the Greens and supported by Senators Lambie, Patrick and Griff, who had unified across political divides, defeated their efforts to make workplaces safer for women and to introduce 10 days paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave as a new universal right.

The Morrison Government with the support of One Nation blocked amendments recommended by the Respect@Work report which would have:

- Put a positive duty on employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace
- Expressly prohibited sexual harassment and introduced a new quick and easy complaints process in the Fair Work Act
- Broadened the powers of the Sex Discrimination Commissioner to instigate inquiries

They also opposed an amendment to include in the National Employment Standards 10 days paid Family and Domestic Violence leave.

The ACTU along with a wide range of organisations and the Sex Discrimination Commissioner herself, have been pressing the Morrison Government to adopt all legislative measures recommended by the Respect@Work report which they commissioned.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:

“Violence and harassment in the workplace is a national crisis – the Labor party and the Greens moved amendments supported by Senators Lambie, Patrick and Griff to make work safer for women, while the Morrison Government and One Nation actively worked to halt that effort.

“Two in five women and one in four men have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the last five years.

“Prime Minister Morrison had an opportunity today to back up his talk on sexual harassment at work and violence against women. Instead, his government voted against the very changes needed to make a difference. We won’t give up this fight”

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