



**Northern Ireland
Assembly**

**COMMITTEE
FOR EMPLOYMENT
AND LEARNING**

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(Hansard)**

Draft Report on Employment Bill

21 October 2009

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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FOR EMPLOYMENT
AND LEARNING**

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Ms Sue Ramsey (Chairperson)
Mr Thomas Buchanan (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Paul Butler
Mr Trevor Clarke
Mr David Hilditch
Mr William Irwin
Ms Anna Lo
Mr David McClarty
Mrs Claire McGill

The Chairperson (Ms S Ramsey):

The Committee's draft report on the Employment Bill is at agenda item 4. I propose to look at each page of the draft report, and I will ask whether members have any comments. I remind members that we have agreed the clauses of the Bill and schedules to the Bill as drafted. Members signalled that they are content with the proposed amendments to the Bill, with the caveat that the Committee reserves the right to change its view on the proposed amendments if the Executive are not content with them or if further information is brought to the Committee's attention.

The relevant part of the draft report starts on page 4. Are members content with pages 4 and 5 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 6 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 7 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 8 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 9 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 10 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 11 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 12 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 13 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 14 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 15 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 16 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content with page 17 of the draft report?

Members indicated assent.

The Chairperson:

Are members content that the report should be printed?

Members indicated assent.

The Committee Clerk:

We expect other amendments to be proposed during Consideration Stage. We know that the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is going to propose one. We have not yet seen all

the detail of that. However, any proposed amendments will be made available to the Committee, and Committee members can intervene at Consideration Stage. It has been written a number of times into the report that the existing proposed amendments from the Department for Employment and Learning will be supported by the Committee on the understanding that neither the wording nor the context changes. The Committee also reserves the right to withdraw support if the Executive do not accept those amendments or if they accept any other amendments. The Committee has provisionally agreed to the clauses of the Bill and the schedules to the Bill as drafted.

Mr T Clarke:

Are any of the proposed amendments about what was discussed during today's evidence session? If they are, why have we agreed to the printing of the report?

The Chairperson:

We do not know, as they are still being discussed. That is why we included the caveat that the Committee reserves the right to withdraw support.

Mr T Clarke:

Is it prudent to print the report if there is a possibility that some of the changes may affect the Committee's support?

The Chairperson:

The draft report has to be printed before Consideration Stage. Any Member can propose an amendment at Consideration Stage. Our draft report is based on the evidence that we have received and on the proposed amendments that we have seen.

The Committee Clerk:

The draft report signals support only for the clauses and schedules as drafted. The Committee's provisional support for the amendments that are to be proposed by the Department for Employment and Learning can be withdrawn at any time. Any changes to context or wording will result in all bets being off. If new information comes to light or the Executive decides that they are not happy with the proposed amendments, the Committee's support is dead in the water.

The Chairperson:

Therefore, we are agreeing only to what is in front of us.