

DISCLAIMER

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Monday 25 June 2018
9:17am

GOVERNMENT ORDERS OF THE DAY – Reading of Bills

1. EDUCATION AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – resumption debate on second reading

I. Hon LOAU Sola Keneti Sio, Minister of Education, Sports and Culture

The Hon Minister of Education, Sports and Culture, LOAU Sola Keneti Sio addressed the Members who had spoken on the Bill, and attempted to respond to the queries raised by his fellow Parliamentarians.

In regards to the literacy and numeracy levels in schools, the Hon Minister asserted that records have shown positive improvements in these levels. In response to the expected age of Early Childhood Education (ECE) from 4 years of age, the Hon Minister clarified that the introductory stage is a crucial time in the development of a child's brain thus Government's intention to have this level included as formal learning. Hon LOAU explained that the success of ECE relies on the capacity of the Teachers. Additionally, the National University of Samoa has in place degree level program which pertains specifically to ECE. In response to Corporal Punishment being reintroduced; Hon Minister clarified that the provision to apply 'reasonable force' is not punishment rather an 'act to prevent' the child from causing harm to another.

The Hon Minister elaborated that the rationale behind the bill is to protect Teachers from the law; citing an example of violence at the market between schools (school brawls), whereby an intervention by the teacher to minimize the danger was regarded as 'assault' however the act was done so as to prevent other students from the danger, therefore the Ministry's intention to introduce the term "reasonable force". Furthermore the Ministry will implement workshops for teachers to clarify the application of 'reasonable force'.

i. LEALAILEPULE Rimoni Aiafi, Member for Faleata West

The Member queried the attempt by the Ministry to replace the term ‘Special Needs’ with ‘Disability’ stating that such term was derogatory. Also noting the Ministry’s attempt to change the term ‘village schools’ to ‘government schools’ as this would denounce ownership by villages.

Hon LOAU Sola Keneti Sio, Minister of Education, Sports and Education

The Hon Minister noted the issue raised by the Member for Faleata, and explained that the term ‘disability’ was widely utilised by the United Nations Convention thus its application in the amendment, however changes may be proposed when the Bill is referred to Committee.

The Education Amendment Bill 2018 was second read and referred to the ‘Social Sector Parliamentary Committee’

2. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.3) 2018 – second reading (Urgency)

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt moved for the Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill 2018 to be second read and spoke to clarify the objects of the Bill.

The Hon Minister clarified that the Bill seeks to increase the price of tobacco by 5% annually instead of 3 years.

[No Members spoke on the bill, therefore the Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill 2018 was second read]

Mr Speaker informed the House that the Bill will progress under Urgency; then proceeded to the Consideration in Detail stage.

3. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.3) 2018 – Consideration in detail

Clause 2 – *Approved*

Clause 3 – *Approved*

Clause 1: Short Title and Commencement – *Approved*

4. EXCISE TAX RATES AMENDMENT BILL (No.3) 2018 – Third reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt moved for the Bill to be third read, motion seconded and approved;

The Excise Tax Rates Amendment Bill 2018 was third read and passed the Legislative Assembly.

5. INCOME TAX AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – second reading (Urgency)

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt moved for the second reading of the Income Tax Amendment Bill 2018; motion seconded and the Hon Minister clarified the Bill.

The Hon Minister clarified that the Bill has 2 objectives:

- i) allow sponsors a deduction to their assessable income for a tax year at 200% for sponsorship for the 2019 Pacific Games; and
- ii) provide that monetary gifts received by religious ministers during funerals, weddings and other traditional, government or family occasion will not be taxed under the relevant Act.

i. ALIIMALEMNU Alofa Tuuau, Member for Alataua West

The Member suggested that such provision should not be solely for religious ministers but also applicable to the general public especially in terms of gifts received during funerals, weddings and any other traditional, government, village or family occasion.

INTERJECTION – Hon PRIME MINISTER, TUILAEPa

The Hon Prime Minister interjected to clarify that the amendment is simply to provide consolidation and ensure there are no loopholes in the Income Tax Act.

ii. FAAULUSAU Rosa Duffy-Stowers, Member for Gagaifomauga No.3

The Member noted the proposal of 200% was too high, stating that this may have an impact on the economy of Samoa.

iii. SULAMANAIA Fetaiai Tauiliili Tuivasa, Member for Vaimauga East

The Member expressed his support for the Bill and suggested to reduce the percentage from 200% to 150%; noting that businesses may exploit this reduction to gain maximum returns at the expense of Government.

iv. OLO Fiti Afoa Vaai, Member for Salega East

The Member called for the returns on donations by businesses to be lowered to 120% as the games will only be conducted in a short period (2-3 weeks).

HON TIALAVEA FEA LENIU TIONISIO SEIGAFOLAVA HUNT, MINISTER FOR REVENUE

The Hon Minister clarified the underlying overtones at the time of the Bill was to ensure every Samoan contributed to the development of the nation, further noting that the 200% is implemented to attract more businesses to donate and sponsor the Pacific Games set to be held in 2019.

v. FAUMUINA Wayne Fong, Member for Urban West

The Member called for an initiative to foster better working relationships between the Private sector and Government; he then suggested the 200% return should be applied to companies sponsoring the Manu Samoa game.

vi. FUIMAONO Teo Samuelu Teo, Member for Falealili East

The Member commented on the different revenue generators during the Pacific Games such as tourists, athletes and supporters; suggesting the percentage be raised to 250%. The Member noted his disappointment with the Minister, stating that most amendment bills by the Ministry for Revenue is always considered under urgency (not giving the people sufficient opportunity to voice their opinions).

INTERJECTION – Hon PRIME MINISTER, TUILAEPA Fatialofa Loloﬁetele Lupesoliai Dr Sailele Malielegaoi

The Hon Prime Minister clarified that the bid to host the Pacific Games was done with the knowledge that Samoa had the capacity to do so; he then refuted claims by the Members who noted that Samoa was not prepared. The Hon PM explained that Members should refrain from making statements that were rather sarcastic.

POINT of Clarification – Hon Speaker

The Hon Speaker noted that the amendment was for clarification purposes; he emphasised the role of Parliamentarians was to clarify and explain Government's plans and legislation passed by the Assembly to the constituents.

6. INCOME TAX AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – Consideration in detail

Clause 2 – Approved

Clause 3 – Approved

Clause 1: Short Title and Commencement – Approved

7. INCOME TAX AMENDMENT BILL 2018 – Third reading

The Hon Minister for Revenue, TIALAVEA Fea Leniu Tionisio Seigafolava Hunt moved for the Bill to be third read, motion seconded and approved;

The Income Tax Amendment Bill 2018 was third read and passed the Legislative Assembly.

MOTION – Hon LAUTAFI Fio Selafi Purcell

The Hon Minister of Commerce, Industry and Labour moved for the adjournment of proceedings until Tuesday 2 October 2018. Motion seconded and approved.

Proceedings were adjourned at 10:33am and will reconvene on Tuesday 2 October 2018 at 9:00am