

WREN'S WEEK: Union-busting, Medevac and #AngusGate

By John Wren

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A week of surprises in Parliament with the death of the EI Bill and the repeal of the Medevac Bill, but the #TaylorGate fiasco lives on.

AGAINST THE expectations of everyone – and especially the Morrison Government – last week saw One Nation senators Pauline Hanson and Malcolm Roberts side with Labor and the Greens to block Morrison's [union-busting Bill](#) in the Senate.

This is the first time in my memory that One Nation has voted against the Coalition Government. The question is why they did this. I can only surmise that a significant portion of One Nation's support base is union members. Although Hanson's support base is reasonably safe, Roberts' is not. Had they not voted the Bill down, they would have faced a fierce campaign in Queensland (and elsewhere) pointing out that it was One Nation

who was responsible for degrading workers' (who also vote) wages and conditions. It would have been a reprise of the "Workchoices" campaign, and it would have cost Roberts his seat.

Defeating the Ensuring Integrity Bill

<https://t.co/ykrtOG5Mkc>

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The only way of ensuring integrity was not to pass this savage bill.

—  Don Wilson (@gorgeousdunny1)
[December 5, 2019](#)

There is also the Queensland state election coming up next year and One Nation hopes to do well — particularly against rural LNP candidates who are seen as not doing enough to support farmers. The same campaign would likely destroy One Nation's chances.

The blocking of the Bill was a major blow to the Government's plans for next year. The hissy fits and petulance from Government MPs were hilarious. As I've said many times before, the Liberals do not function very effectively in a democracy, hence their constant attempts to circumvent or degrade it. An example of this was the Government re-introducing the Bill in the Lower House this week, with few if any changes. They [gagged any](#)

[debate](#) on the Bill and just forced the vote so they could send it back to the Senate for another attempt. If Morrison is looking for a double-dissolution trigger that would lead to a Federal election focusing on union power, he is even more deluded than I already credit him with. It would indeed be Workchoices 2.0, with an almost identical result. Bring it on.

Morrison's shutting down debate was commented on by Warringah Independent MP [Zali Steggall](#). Steggall has been highly critical of the Government's inaction on climate change, the Medevac repeal and other matters. She has made many public statements condemning the Government on such issues. The question remains, though, if she is really so disappointed in the Government, why does not simply threaten to side with Labor and the Greens in a no-confidence motion? Steggall has the power to bring the Government down. Perhaps instead of just making hypocritical public statements, she could actually end the fascist farce that the Government has descended into.

On the Medevac repeal, we saw Tasmanian Independent Senator [Jacquie Lambie](#) become the key vote. Under intense pressure, she buckled in some sort of secret deal that she has refused to reveal. The deal was rumoured to include the Government finally taking up New Zealand's offer to re-settle 400-500 of the refugees in Nauru. The Government does not want the refugees to settle in NZ, apparently, because after a few years many will become NZ citizens and would thus be eligible to settle in Australia. Why they would want to, given the way Australia has treated them to date is beyond me.

After the vote that saw Lambie shed public crocodile tears, [Morrison](#) was already walking away from the deal. The Government has shafted Lambie. Morrison and Dutton are incapable of negotiating in good faith. What astonishes me about all this is that Lambie is not a novice when it comes to negotiating with the Government. She would have known they would renege on any agreement, yet she still voted with them.

The whole Medevac mess is appalling. These refugees and/or asylum-seekers are Australia's responsibility. [Nauru](#) is a politically corrupt vassal state of Australia. Nauru is operating these camps on Australia's behalf, grossly overpaid for with Australian dollars and manned by Australian personnel. Australia has a duty of care to provide medical care for those in our custody. Medical care is a basic human right. In effect, the Bill was Australia walking away from its moral and legal obligations to care for those under its protection. It is utterly shameful. Even recently deceased serial killer [Ivan Milat](#) received better medical care than many of those incarcerated on Nauru.

Australia once led the world on the defence of human rights. We played a leading role through [Doc Evatt](#) in the establishment of the United Nations. It is sickening how far we have compromised on those essential Australian values we once celebrated. In fact, the thought that Lambie would even negotiate on human rights instead of holding her ground and defending them is her biggest indictment. She is not the battler's friend-Canberra outsider she pretends to be. She is just another self-serving trough-feeder. The damage she has

done to her personal brand on this matter is profound. She may never recover from it. Time will tell.

The Angus Taylor omnishambles has also continued this week unabated. The latest debacle was his commentary about American progressive author and thought-leader, [Naomi Wolf](#). He claimed that she was at Oxford University at the same time he was and that while there, he saw her actively campaign against the celebration of Christmas. It did not take much sleuthing to discover that firstly, Wolf had left Oxford a full three years before Taylor had commenced there. And secondly, the whole Christmas story was a fabrication anyway. This mess culminated with Wolf releasing a recording of a 30-minute [conversation](#) with one of Taylor's staffers that leaves no doubt whatsoever that Taylor is a liar.

Taylor also threw one of his staffers under the bus to try to defend himself on the forged Sydney City Council document but also stated that the employee would receive no sanction suggesting that the staffer, [Josh Manuatu](#), was simply taking one for the team and in fact probably played little or no part in the saga at all.

We can expect to see a Cabinet reshuffle before Christmas. If Taylor is dumped from the Morrison Cabinet, I'd be very surprised. He is a dead weight on Morrison's already laggard Government. Morrison knows it, he is now just waiting for the right moment to take out the trash. Apparently, a huge skip has been ordered for Parliament House on Christmas Eve.

You can sign the petition to have [John Wren](#) reinstated on

Twitter [here](#).

Angus Taylor and the Coalition protection racket

<https://t.co/zERYqT8yLZ>

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— Geoff Pearson

(@GCobber99) [November 28, 2019](#)