

ACTU calls on Dutton to rule out changes to workplace laws that are boosting wage growth

The ACTU is calling on Opposition Leader Peter Dutton to rule out any changes to industrial relations laws in his budget reply speech tonight.

The call comes after Liberal Party frontbenchers including Shadow Treasurer Angus Taylor and Shadow Minister for Workplace Relations Michaelia Cash have stated the need to “reform industrial relations.” Angus Taylor also said that the Coalition would take a “targeted package of repeals”, on industrial relations to the election. Peter Dutton has committed to repealing the new right to disconnect.

The government’s workplace laws – including equal pay, multi-employer bargaining and same job same pay for labour-hire workers – along with their support for lifting minimum wages and aged care workers’ wages, have contributed to higher wage growth for workers, alleviating cost-of-living pressures. This was confirmed in yesterday’s Wage Price Index data, which showed real wages over the past year grew by the same amount as the total over nearly 10 years of the previous Coalition Government. The Budget also forecasts real wages continuing to grow.

Quotes attributable to ACTU President Michele O’Neil:

“Unions are calling for Peter Dutton to rule out any changes to workplace laws.

“Whenever someone in the Coalition commits to ‘reforming industrial relations,’ Australian workers know that it’s code for cutting their wages and taking away their rights.

“Working people will pay close attention to what Peter Dutton says about workers’ rights and wages. The last thing Australians need right now is another Liberal government committed to undermining their wages and rights while they face cost-of-living pressures.

“Workers won’t forget that Peter Dutton is from the party that brought us WorkChoices, which cut the wages and conditions of ordinary Australians. Workers also won’t forget that when the Coalition was last in power, they cut penalty rates and oversaw wage stagnation for nearly a decade.

“Workers rightly expect bipartisan support for new rights that have increased their wages and job security. Peter Dutton needs to come clean with working Australians tonight: will he repeal their workplace rights that have boosted their pay packets or not?”

ENDS

Media Contact: Cameron Warasta 0447 159 467