



COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

PROOF

ADJOURNMENT

White Ribbon Day

SPEECH

Monday, 23 November 2009

BY AUTHORITY OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SPEECH

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| <p>Date Monday, 23 November 2009 Page 104 Questioner Speaker Rishworth, Amanda, MP</p> | <p>Source House Proof Yes Responder Question No.</p> |
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Ms RISHWORTH (Kingston) (9.35 pm)—I rise today to raise awareness for White Ribbon Day on Wednesday, 25 November. White Ribbon Day is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. This is something that all of us in this House should and, I have no doubt, do support. It is something that we should all aspire to within our local communities. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the White Ribbon Foundation, which works all year round to make violence against women a thing of the past. That is their slogan and it is the mandate they are pursuing. Most importantly, the White Ribbon Foundation not only sees violence against women as a women's issue but sees involving men as critical to finding a solution.

I take this opportunity to recognise the many high-profile men who have stood up and been counted by saying violence against women is not appropriate. In fact, many men have made an oath. You can go online to make this oath. I would encourage as many men as possible to go online to make this oath on the website. These men have sworn never to use violence against a woman, they have sworn never to excuse violence against women and they have sworn not to remain silent about violence against women. This is the oath they have taken.

White Ribbon Day gives us a day to focus on when our nation has a collective opportunity to raise awareness about the issue of violence against women. The White Ribbon Foundation urges people to do a number of things. There are a number of ways that people can get involved with this very important day: men can wear a ribbon or a wrist band or they can swear to end violence against women and people can make a donation, hold an event in their community to raise awareness or simply tell their family and friends.

The date of 25 November is International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. Often we hear about violence against women that occurs in other countries. While it is very important to condemn violence against women wherever it takes place, we must not forget that violence against women is occurring at alarming levels here in Australia. The White Ribbon Day website indicates that one in three Australian women will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. More than one Australian woman every week is killed by her partner or ex-

partner. The biggest contributor to illness, injury and premature death for women aged between 15 and 45 is violence perpetrated by a husband, boyfriend or ex-partner. The cost to our society is great. The cost of violence against women is projected to be over \$15.1 billion in health costs, worker absenteeism and police and court costs. The impact is great.

I note that in the House earlier this evening a motion was moved by the member for Indi on this important issue. While the motion made some important points, it was incredibly disappointing that she used this important issue, which usually receives bipartisan support, to make cheap political points about the education revolution. It has been said regularly in this place that there is a time in some debates to come together to put down partisan politics and to work towards a greater good. I can think of no better issue than supporting a zero tolerance position on violence against women. I urge everyone in this House not to make it a partisan issue but to support White Ribbon Day and, for the other 364 days of the year, to promote zero tolerance for violence against women and children in our society.