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# Daily Media Overview



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# Revamped bill to test ALP on forcing out rogue union bosses

Phillip Coorey

A revamped bill that lowers the threshold for the deregistration of unions, employer groups and officials will be put to a vote in the lower house in the next fortnight in what the government says will be a test of Anthony Albanese's leadership.

However, despite the bill being substantially rewritten to address concerns expressed by the Opposition last year, Labor remains opposed and has stalled a final Senate vote until October by referring it to a parliamentary committee.

The legislation, known as the Ensuring Integrity Bill, has been brought forward to test Labor as it grapples with trying to expel from its ranks the militant union official John Setka.

The legislation is opposed by the union movement and Labor previously voted against it, citing inconsistencies with provisions in the bill compared with laws that deal with corporate Australia.

Earlier this month, Industrial Relations Minister Christian Porter reintroduced the bill to Parliament with amendments taking these concerns into account.

As far as was possible, the provisions relating to unions were harmonised

with corporate law, including the grounds on which an official can be disqualified and penalties for criminal offences.

The government intends to have the lower house debate and pass the bill in the next sitting fortnight, before the five-week winter break.

"The Ensuring Integrity Bill is a key reform designed to ensure that registered organisations covering both

employer and employee organisations operate according to the highest standards of integrity and according to the law," Mr Porter told *The Australian Financial Review*.

"Labor has voted against previous

efforts to introduce these reforms. The bill has been amended to better align it with the offences and penalties that apply to companies and directors under the Corporations Act.

"This presents a major early test for the new Labor leader, Anthony Albanese. If he is serious about getting rid of

union thugs, he and his party should be supporting this bill."

The union movement remains opposed to the bill and was in Parliament this month lobbying Labor MPs as well as Senate crossbenchers.

Shadow industrial relations minister Tony Burke said the caucus would consider the bill next week but he has already said the changes didn't go far enough and he remained opposed to the bill.

"We will continue to consult and work through the detail but we will not support a bill that makes it harder for workers to get a fair pay rise," he told *Guardian Australia* last week.

"We will not support a bill that could leave workers without the representatives that protect them from wage theft, superannuation theft and dangerous workplaces."

The concerns include that anyone with a "sufficient interest" could apply to the Federal Court to have an official disqualified or a union deregistered. The bill also allows anyone to object to a union amalgamation, such as the recent marriage between the CFMEU and the Maritime Union of Australia.

The passage of the bill is still possible with the support of the Senate crossbench but would have no direct bearing on Mr Setka, as it is prospective.

## Provisions relating to unions were harmonised with corporate law.



































































































































