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MENTAL HEALTH (REPEAL OF HARBOURING OFFENCE) AMENDMENT BILL

The Hon. A. BRESSINGTON (11:43): I rise to indicate that I support the Hon. Tammy Jennings' amendment. I did not vote in favour of this amendment originally and I am so pleased that this language is now going to be, hopefully, taken out of this particular bill.

The mentally ill need support. They would go to people they are familiar with if they abscond from facilities like this for a reason. I believe this particular part of the bill puts families in a very difficult position, dealing with very difficult circumstances. I also would like to say that, if a family member does not want a person under a detention order in the family home, they have the opt-in of being able to call the authorities and police and have that person taken back into care without facing penalties that criminalise nothing more than families caring for family members.

I think we are making a big mistake, and the Hon. Michelle Lensink mentioned that, in the same way as the Children's Protection Act, it is there to protect the vulnerable. Well, we fail miserably in that area, too, so perhaps it is time that we took a new view on how we try to protect the vulnerable. Criminalising everybody and everything is not the answer to solving the problems that we are facing with this.

Perhaps, if the mental health system were better funded, we would not have half the problems we are having now with this issue. We cannot deny that funding plays a role in this, given that the head of mental health at a federal level resigned, I think last week, stating that our approach to mental health is ineffective and a joke, and I think that leaks down to a state level. I support this bill and commend the Hon. Tammy Jennings for introducing it. I hope it gains the support of the house.

Debate adjourned on motion of Hon. R.P. Wortley.