

Senate Members of Parliament Gold Pass Bill

The Secretary
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
Parliament House
Canberra
A.C.T 2600



Dear Sir/Madam

In regard to the life gold pass, my first impression is that the enquiry is being conducted by people who may be influenced by those who are the intended recipients of the pass. To be generous I will assume that is not the case and put forward the following argument.

Since the inception of the Government in this Country we have had a change of the elected representatives of the people, from a humble working and poorer class of person, to a more affluent and richer class, who have altered the original concepts of remuneration to further enhance their own lifestyle.

Most Parliamentarians these days are worth millions of dollars in their own right, and yet they cost the taxpayer over a third of a billion dollars each year after they leave office. This cost is in excess of even Great Britain or America on a per capita basis. Imagine what that sort of money could be used for in actual benefit to the nation. No other employee of any other industry or service is entitled to such riches. It means that the elected representatives are saying that their efforts over a few short years of office are far more worthy than the average person over their entire lifetime. Not only that, but to get a complete list of the benefits and perks by way of the freedom of information act, has been quoted as costing over \$1000000! That in itself is evidence enough that they do not want this information to see the light of day, and to get the obvious public backlash that it deserves.

By contrast I look at somebody who may have served his or her Country by way of the Military. These people work in horrendous conditions, are subject to strict discipline and if unfortunate enough to have to go to war, are rewarded by way of a VETERANS AFFAIRS system that treats them like they are all after a free lunch. Typically the same person would come out of the military after 6 to 9 years and work as normal a life as possible until retirement.

Their benefit would be some small superannuation payment if they were fortunate, a concession card that has some minimum discounts on a few Government services and a travel pas that gives them a third class seat on

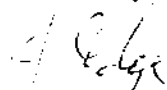
a train once a year. In the case of South Australia, the pass is worthless, as it is impossible to go anywhere but Broken Hill.

The Gold pass proposal not only rewards the person who served in Parliament for their dubious efforts, but also the relatives of that person who have contributed nothing. It is just this sort of stealing from the public purse that Revolutions around the globe are bred from, and given enough of a push, there would have to be some sort of reform within Australia.

I therefore ask that the pass be downgraded (if not ideally eliminated) over a period of time so that the only argument that could exist for the pass would be reintegration into normal life. That should not be a period of more than three years. The present use undoubtedly includes the cost of travel to speaking circuits, where the person concerned reaps a great deal of remuneration from the function. I also do not see why the pass has to be first class as it is now a matter of fact that the holder is not longer in need of such luxuries for their now normal life, and should be delegated to a maximum of business class, if not standard economy. If the mode of transport were economy, I would expect a big reduction in the use of the card when the holder was forced to travel with the common folk they once represented. Perhaps this would force those in office to get out once in a while to see what retirement brings for them, and maybe they would pass legislation for the average person that better reflects what they have contributed during their working lives.

We already have the most generous self voted politicians retirement scheme in the world, it is about time somebody saw the huge damage it is doing to the Country as a whole, and the fact that 200 to 300 people are raping the economy to this level of abuse. I am asking you to stop the rot, to eliminate or vastly reduce the benefit so that it better reflects the generally small contribution that the person has made to the Country of Australia.

Yours Truly



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