

DRAFT SECOND READING SPEECH

HON. M. T. (RENE) HIDDING MP

Sentencing Amendment (Assaults on Off-Duty Police) Bill 2017

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Madam Speaker,

I move that the Bill now be read a second time.

The purpose of the Bill is to provide off-duty police officers with the same level of protection from assault that is received by on-duty police officers.

In 2014 the Government moved an amendment to the *Sentencing Act 1997*, inserting a new section 16A, to provide a mandatory minimum sentence of imprisonment of six months for persons who commit offences against on-duty police officers that result in serious bodily harm. Since that time, a recent case in the north of the state has highlighted the need to extend this mandatory sentencing provision to offences directed against police officers when off-duty.

The nature of police work means police officers often come into conflict with individuals in the execution of their duty. Individuals aggrieved by police interventions may subsequently feel malice towards police, either individually or generally, and may draw no distinction between when a police officer is on-duty or off-duty. In fact, acting on that malice may be more likely against an off-duty police officer, who won't be as well-equipped or supported as an on-duty member.

To deter individuals from targeting off-duty police officers, and to provide police officers with appropriate protection, the Bill extends the mandatory sentencing provision to also cover offences against off-duty police officers. However, to ensure the provision does not apply to an offence against an off-duty police officer that is not motivated by their position as a police officer, the provision in relation to off-duty police officers will be limited to circumstances where the offence was committed solely or partly because the police officer was a police officer.

The Bill will become law on the day on which it receives Royal Assent.

I commend the Bill to the House.