



KWAZULU-NATAL LEGISLATURE

AN ACTIVIST PEOPLE-CENTRED LEGISLATURE

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Hon NN Boyce, MPL
Speaker of the KZN Legislature
By Email/ Hand Delivery

Voter Education during School Functionality Visits: Hon Mavimbela, MPL speech at Thibane Combined School

Madam Speaker,

While voter education is a mandate of the legislature and it forms part of our programme and interaction over a period of time, especially this year that precedes an election year, I am concerned about the details below. I am concerned that this may become a trend of the member mentioned and others, and this is indeed abhorrent.

On the last day of the school visits in the Harry Gwala District at Thibane Combined School, the Honourable Mavimbela, MPL was granted an opportunity to address an assembly of learners, staff of the school and department officials present, and this included MPL's and legislature staff as well.

I captured a portion of this address on video but, due to the length of the speech, I ended it before the most concerning remarks were captured. I must point out that while what concerns me most was not captured on video, her remarks can and should be confirmed by anyone present. When I spoke to the Honourable member after the programme, and in the presence of Cllr Marncé, she went on to confirm what she had said and defended her view. Almost her entire speech was censurable and I am hopeful that you will consider the gravitas of this in your scrutiny of this complaint.

I find it inexcusable that Hon Mavimbela reminded learners in particular [and others present] that many 'receive pensions/ grants and that it is important for them to vote because you don't know which government will come in next year and whether you will still receive your grants, and if there will be a budget for your toilets if a new government comes in.'

In the recorded part of the speech [available upon request] she said, to this effect:

"I know young learners aren't eligible to vote, however I'm addressing those who are close to the voting age, Grade 12 and 11.

If you at times feel that your needs are not met and yet decide to not vote, those who do go, they then vote on your behalf with their votes. This means that even though you do not vote, those who do, decide for you, on your behalf. Maybe you would make a difference with that just one vote.

This disadvantages us as a Province if people do not vote, and I'm telling you this so that you can tell even those at home. For us to get the Budget, it is determined by the number of people in the Province and the number of those who voted.

School's budget is determined based on that number. When we check Census we discover that the number of registered voters is way bigger than the actual number that voted, then this means that the only people who deserve service delivery are those who voted.

If we don't encourage people to go and vote, our budget will always be less. And we will always struggle to meet the needs of learners. You will find government spending R2.30 on each learner per day on School Nutrition which is way too less."

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Clearly there is a superabundance of party political messaging interwoven with inaccuracies, deception and fear-mongering in her words, and this is excessively concerning. If anything, this was nothing more than a campaign speech and a subliminal threat given to voters and potential voters to vote only for the current governing party.

It is indeed odious that the Hon Mavimbela would use a legislature platform to campaign in this manner and to make highly contestable remarks such as this, to potentially new and impressionable voters. It is also highly irresponsible to do so.

If she wants to mislead citizens and provide misinformation, the platform of the legislature is not to be used and the rules that guide our official legislature work prohibit us from doing so. There is not need for me to cite chapter and verse to confirm this.

This type of messaging where citizens are often told, from certain party-political platforms, that only one party has provided grants and that citizens stand to lose their grants if any other political party is in power, is well known.

This correspondence is neither to debate this matter nor to expand on the ridiculous, wrong and tasteless use of the platform that the Honourable member was accorded. It is to point out that members must be cautioned not to abuse public platforms accorded by Legislature programmes to misguide the public. And, that if this occurs, members must be held accountable through due process and the rules.

My engagement with the Hon Mavimbela is not enough. She holds high office in the institution. I therefore write to you in the hope that you will seek an explanation from her and to determine whether her actions and words as described above are within our rules and regulations, and to determine whether she abused the platform to further the ends of her political party, even though she did not mention it by name. Also, given her words, to determine if the content was both sanctioned and whether it was/ is correct.

Best regards,


Dr Imran Keeka, MPL

CC: Hon Rodgers, MPL

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By 
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