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NORTHERN IRELANDS LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY

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DUP NEWS**Latest News:****DUP IS COMMITTED TO DELIVERING FOR VICTIMS**

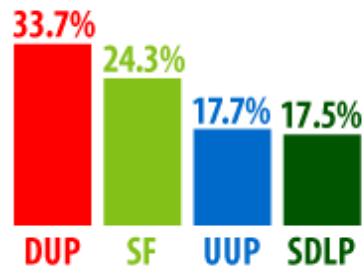
Speaking following the debate on the Consideration Stage of the Commission for Victims and Survivors Bill the DUP's South Belfast MLA Jimmy Spratt said,

"This is an extremely significant step for Northern Ireland . After years of neglect under Direct Rule and the previous administration, at last we see a mechanism by which the victims of our province will be served effectively. This body will be supported by the £36m allocated to the victims sector in the recent Budget administered by my colleague Peter Robinson, the Minister for Finance and Personnel.

It is welcome that we have an effective strategy with the necessary resources to help those who need our help both now and in the future. Any delay in this Bill is worthwhile if that delay brings about improvements in making this an effective framework for the future. The DUP have long made the needs of victims an issue at the very top of the political agenda. This Bill signifies delivery on our pledges. the party holds a principled view on these issues and has refused to be diverted from getting proper delivery."

The DUP's Upper Bann MLA Stephen Moutray continued by commenting on one significant amendment to the Bill which ensures that no one with a criminal record will be appointed as an employee of the Commission. Mr Moutray said,

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“This is a much broader amendment than what was proposed by the UUP in that it disallows the Commission to appoint as an employee anyone who has at anytime been convicted of a criminal offence. Furthermore, it includes that the Commission may only make the appointment if it has obtained approval of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

The problem with Danny Kennedy’s amendment is the phrase “conflict-related offence”. Such an inclusion only relates to individuals who have a criminal conviction related only to the 30 years of Troubles. This quite simply does not include individuals who have criminal conviction not related to the Troubles. Ultimately such a statement creates a limiter and excludes those in society who have a criminal offence of a serious nature.

An example of such would be a paedophile applying for and obtaining position, a non-sectarian murderer, a convicted rapist, a fraudster, someone of whom has been involved in causing grievous bodily harm, a convicted Northern Bank raider to name but a few.”

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