

Lords Committee Stage Brief on the Gangmasters Bill

10 June 2004

Introduction

The ALP has been established by a group of labour providers that wish to improve standards in the industry further, to demonstrate their compliance with the law and to influence the public policy debate on matters of concern to them. Currently, the Association, which was established in February, has 27 members. Full details of the Association's membership, activities and policies can be found on its website.

The Association has been involved in the development of the Bill and has made a number of comments which have been incorporated into the Bill as it currently stands.

Full support for the Bill

The legislation is fully supported by the ALP and it is the hope of the Association that the legislation is enacted and implemented as soon as possible. While the Association would prefer some minor changes to the wording of the Bill none is substantive and most can be accommodated in secondary legislation. Accordingly the Association is not seeking any amendments and hopes that the Bill as currently worded will be approved by the Lords.

Currently, there are two broad types of gangmaster – those seeking to operate within the law and those that flout the law. The latter generally evade tax and accordingly are able to undercut legitimate gangmasters while making handsome profits. In some parts of the country it can be difficult for legitimate gangmasters to get business for this reason. Legitimate gangmasters therefore have a strong interest in removing the illegitimate ones from the marketplace. The Association sees the legislation as being one mechanism to help achieve this objective.

However, it is important to understand that the legislation in itself will not be sufficient to deal with the problem. There needs to be greater enforcement of existing legislation by the existing enforcement agencies. The legislation will facilitate but enforcement activity needs to be stepped up now given that it is likely to be two years before the legislation can be fully in force.

Further information

I am very happy to discuss the Bill and gangmasters generally with interested Lords at any time.

Mark Boleat

Chairman, Association of Labour Providers