



Northern Ireland
Assembly

**COMMITTEE
FOR EMPLOYMENT
AND LEARNING**

**OFFICIAL REPORT
(Hansard)**

Student Loans (Amendment) Bill

29 September 2010

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chairperson)
Mr Jonathan Bell (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sydney Anderson
Rev Dr Robert Coulter
Mr Chris Lyttle
Mr David McClarty
Mrs Claire McGill

The Chairperson (Mrs D Kelly):

We move to our clause-by-clause scrutiny of the Student Loans (Amendment) Bill. The Bill will prevent student loans being included in individual voluntary arrangements. The responses to the Department's consultation on the Bill were supportive, as was the single response to the Committee's public notice on the Bill. The Examiner of Statutory Rules has provisionally indicated that the delegated powers in the Bill are appropriate and that a full report will be forthcoming. At its last meeting, the Committee heard from the presidents of the two student unions, and they had no objections to the Bill; correspondence to the Committee from the National Union of Students and the Union of Students in Ireland was also supportive.

The Committee Clerk:

As members are aware, the Bill has only two clauses: clause 1 is the substantive provision that prevents student loans being included in individual arrangements; that brings the legislation into line with the provisions for student loans and bankruptcy. Members will recall the member of Legal Services who is attached to the Bill outlining the reasons for the change. It is a technical, amending Bill, and, as the Chairperson said, no issues were raised with the Committee about any aspect of it. If members are content, we can move to formal clause-by-clause scrutiny, which would enable the Committee to put together its report on the Bill.

Members indicated assent.

Clause 1 (Student loans: effect of voluntary arrangement)

The Chairperson:

Clause 1 contains a delegated power allowing subordinate legislation to be made in the form of regulations where the level of Assembly control is negative resolution. The Examiner of Statutory Rules has made a provisional assessment of the delegated power and suggests that it is set at an appropriate level of Assembly control. Are members content with the clause?

Question, That the Committee is content with the clause, put and agreed to.

Clause 1 agreed to.

Clause 2 (Short title)

The Chairperson:

Clause 2 is the short title. Are members content with the clause?

Question, That the Committee is content with the clause, put and agreed to.

Clause 2 agreed to.

The Committee Clerk:

That concludes the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill. A draft report will be brought before the Committee in the next two or three weeks, which we can take to the Floor of the Assembly.