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Subject: Taito Phillip Field Won't Support Labour's Move To Include Natural Health Products In A Harsh Pharmaceutical Regulatory Regime

Taito Phillip Field Won't Support Labour's Move To Include Natural Health Products In A Harsh Pharmaceutical Regulatory Regime

Press Release by Hon Taito Phillip Field at 2:49 pm, 16 Mar 2007

Taito Phillip Field Announces He Will Not Support Labour's Legislative Move To Include Natural Health Products In A Harsh Pharmaceutical Regulatory Regime

Field begins a broad attack on Labour's 'ill-disciplined approach' to formation of Bill

On Tuesday 13th March 2007, in the House of Representatives at Question Time, Taito Phillip Field asked Annette King as Minister of State Services whether the Government had the numbers in the House for passing the controversial legislation setting up a Trans Tasman agency with Australia for administering therapeutic products - drugs and natural health products (NHP's).

Yesterday, Taito Phillip Field announced that he will not be supporting Labour in its efforts to get the legislation passed.

That announcement could give the Government a serious problem with having enough votes to continue advancing the Bill.

Taking away peoples' rights to health

Mr Field's reason's for not supporting the proposed legislation focus on concerns that its scope should never have included natural health products (NHP)'s like vitamins and minerals that are often needed to prevent sickness or to treat it in a safer way than patented medicines.

"It's draconian that the rights of individuals to choose effective minerals and nutrients or combinations of them to help them stay well and to get well will be seriously curtailed", Mr Field said today.

"Frankly, it is absurd for this Bill to treat NHP's - substances that we all have in our bodies - as though they were patented drugs that by definition involve chemistry not found in the human body", he added.

"The future health and wellness of all New Zealanders is under serious threat from this legislation taking away the present ready access to efficacious NHP's at reasonable prices.

"Education about the importance of appropriate nutrients and minerals for our people is vital for the future health of all New Zealanders.

"Such education programmes - based on leading-edge sound science - are just getting under way for New Zealand GP's and clinicians interested in best practice medicine at low risk.

"This legislation threatens to sink this training - and reverse the present fast rate of development of the NHP sector.

Significance for diabetes

"Maori and Pacific Islanders are among the highest statistics for diabetes in the world.

"These simple nutrients are critical for low risk and effective control of this condition, whether from food or as a supplement."

Taito Phillip Field went on to add "I am very concerned that the preparation of the Bill seems to have ignored many important principles and processes required by Parliament's own Legislation Advisory Committee Guidelines".

I am seeking an independent professional opinion on what seems to me to be a serious breach of Parliamentary requirements for making a proper approach to new legislation.

"It is therefore little wonder that I am deeply worried that the incorporation of NHP's in this Bill has not been done as part the proper Parliamentary discipline and rigour", he said.

"And it is little wonder that I am alarmed that the public interest of New Zealanders has been ignored by Government in its approach to the Bill".

"We can't allow New Zealand and Australian Government foreign affairs and trade deals on joint agencies to seriously degrade the health and wellness of all New Zealanders", Taito Phillip Field said.

ENDS