



EFF STATEMENT ON PARLIAMENT EFFECTING VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE PACKAGES

Friday, 5 March 2021

The EFF notes with disgust, the disclosure by the Acting Secretary of Parliament, Baby Tyawa, that parliament is to retrench thousands of workers. At the meeting of the Joint Standing Committee on the Financial Management of Parliament on 5 March, Ms Tyawa revealed that parliament is short of over R500 million, just to keep its current staff compliment, and will therefore effect voluntary severance packages, to force staff members out. Parliament argues that this is as a result of severe cuts to their budget, imposed by the national treasury.

This means that parliamentary services will be severely constrained, limiting the ability of members to perform their oversight functions on the executive in a meaningful manner. Parliament staff compliment consist of very crucial positions, such as researchers and content advisors to parliamentary committees, committee secretaries, and others involved in member support services. Discontinuing any of these services will have a huge, deleterious impact on the functioning of parliamentary committees. As things stand already, the legislative drafting unit of parliament is seriously understaffed, impeding the ability of the parliament to process Bills in an efficient manner. This particularly limits the ability of members to develop their own private members Bills, to correct legislative defects. This then leaves only members of cabinet, who have endless supplies of legal advisors, to initiate legislation in parliament.

Parliament has made a lot of senseless financial decisions in the past, which have contributed to current financial mess. When they could not handle robust debates, they employed security guards in the form of the so called “white shirts”, who were previously with the police, and gave them ridiculous amounts of money as salaries. This was over and above the security services that had been in parliament since time immemorial. Parliament can reverse this decision, and have these “white shirts” reenlisted back to the South African Police Service.

There has been a dramatic reduction in the use of flights for members over the past year, as a result of COVID 19. Parliament should redirect the money meant for flights to remunerating staff members. It makes no sense to go back to the way things were in the past, parliament

can continue having hybrid parliament sittings, without the need for people to go back to Cape Town on a weekly basis.

We have in the past submitted that maintaining the Anglo-Boer pact of having parliament in Cape Town, while the seat of government is in Tshwane, makes no political and financial sense. If Parliament was in Tshwane, there'd be no need for most of the costs that parliament incurs at the moment.

The retrenchment of parliament staff follows a well-designed plan of rendering most South Africans poor. The ANC has been laying off staff everywhere since Ramaphosa took over. At Eskom, they have laid off about 2000 staff members, and are looking at retrenching 8000 more. At SAA, thousands of staff members have not been paid since April 2020. At DENEL, the same is happening. The ultimate strategy is to render the role of government as meaningless, so that all key functions, including the functions to make law, can be taken over by the private sector.

We condemn this in the strongest possible way, and ask staff members in parliament to unite and fight this, and we promise to be side by side with them.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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