

12 May 2022

MPP Ricardo Mackenzie – DA Western Cape Acting Spokesperson on Community Safety

Topic for Debate:

The commitment to a non-racial and united South Africa

Paving the way toward a truly non-racial, united South Africa

Honourable Speaker,

In considering my words today, I asked myself a simple question: what can be done to unite this nation that so often finds itself divided? I came up with some immediate answers: love, tolerance, empathy, loyalty, and patriotism – the basic fundamentals that can ensure South Africa succeeds. But I took my question further, and found an article which detailed the responses of various South African social media users to this very question. One person, by the name of Gökay Günay Sébastien Mareka said, and I quote: “Tolerance is key, we must learn to understand each other, one must not hate or belittle the next person based on his or her Heritage.” Honourable Speaker, I could not have put it better myself. We must work together not to see our differences, but to embrace the undeniable potential we have when we work together. The values that will unite us require a commitment from every member of our society to make this country work.

But sadly Honourable Speaker, many Members opposite me have demonstrated that they are NOT ready to Unite South Africa. They themselves are not heeding the call of tolerance, and not belittling the next person. We cannot unite South Africa when members of this house behave in such a way. Honourable Speaker, in what should have been a debate about unity, members opposite have resorted to mudslinging in an effort to tarnish this government’s efforts to uplift the most vulnerable in our society, and to build a united, democratic, and prosperous country and province for all who live in it.

The ANC pits our citizens against each other in a fight over scraps, while those in our national government grow wealthy off misappropriated funds. And yet, some Members opposite would prefer not to address the issues in their own party, but to criticise the DA for its efforts in uplifting this province.

However, I would like to close this debate on a more positive note by highlighting some of the things that this government is doing to unite South Africa from our province. We are building developments like Conradie Park and the Erf 694 Development in my constituency of Mitchells Plain, which provide mixed-use and mixed-income housing to defeat the legacy of apartheid spatial planning. We are not only the only province that boasts three official languages, but also the only province that provided meals to children in schools during the lockdown – something the ANC failed to do in Provinces they control. We have created policies to drive job creation and employment. We have allocated billions to community safety plans, often in response to the failings of the nationally-controlled SAPS. And we have fought for people in our province to receive grants which they have been denied by SASSA, grants which ensure their wellbeing.

Honourable Speaker, these measures show the DA difference. They show our commitment to building an open, united, and non-racial society, and our steadfast commitment to stand against exclusionary policies which might divide us. As another social media user, by the name of Ayanda Mtshamela Ndwe said, “Let us all learn to love and accept each other and work together into making a better and brighter future for the future generation. Let’s all fight together against anything negative [that] looks to have intentions of destroying our beautiful country.” Honourable Chairperson, once again, I could not have put it better myself. I hope that Members opposite will join us in exporting these measures to other provinces across the country to ensure a non-racial and united South Africa.