# Angela Rayner faces backlash over employment rights bill



Angela Rayner, the newly appointed Deputy Prime Minister, is at the helm of a troubling initiative that seeks to fundamentally reshape workers' rights in the United Kingdom through the Employment Rights Bill. This proposed legislation, which will soon be scrutinized in Parliament, contains a contentious clause intended to shield employees from third-party harassment, including that from customers and clients—a move that many fear could stifle legitimate discourse.

Among the notable critics of this bill is Lord Young, a member of the Conservative Party and founder of the Free Speech Union. He has proposed several amendments, vigorously arguing that the bill's current language implies employers are obligated to manage the comments of patrons to protect workers from being offended. This situation could lead to what many are calling a "banter ban," effectively threatening the social fabric of informal interactions, especially in pubs where robust discussions are part of the culture.

Adding to this critical dialogue, the prominent voices of the opposition are expressing deep concern regarding the implications of the legislation. They highlight that Rayner's push for stricter regulations under the guise of protecting workers could lead to a chilling effect on free speech. Nigel Farage has spotlighted this issue through his platform, characterizing pubs as arenas for open debate and suggesting that the new regulations will inhibit the amicable exchange of differing viewpoints. He articulated that such restrictions could diminish the essence of social discourse, arguing, “The new employment rights legislation, while masked as protective, essentially dictates that discussions in pubs should be sanitised to avoid offending staff.”

As this bill approaches its examination in Parliament, it raises critical questions about the balance between safeguarding workers and upholding essential freedoms. The path chosen by the new Labour government appears to lean heavily towards excessive regulation, which may undermine the very democratic engagement they claim to support. Stakeholders across the political spectrum remain poised to challenge these moves, signalling a growing resistance to changes that threaten individual liberties in the workforce.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.lewissilkin.com/en/insights/2024/11/11/employment-rights-bill-unpacked-tougher-stance-on-workplace-harassment> - This URL supports the claim about the Employment Rights Bill making employers liable for third-party harassment, including from customers and clients, and its potential impact on discourse.
* <https://insightplus.bakermckenzie.com/bm/employment-compensation/united-kingdom-what-employers-should-know-about-the-third-party-harassment-duty> - This link corroborates the idea that employers will be liable for third-party harassment unless they demonstrate taking all reasonable steps to prevent it, as proposed in the Employment Rights Bill.
* <https://www.traverssmith.com/knowledge/knowledge-container/employment-rights-bill-what-does-it-mean-for-employers/> - This article provides insights into the Employment Rights Bill, discussing its approach to making employers liable for harassment by third parties and its expected timeline for implementation.
* <https://knowledge.dlapiper.com/dlapiperknowledge/globalemploymentlatestdevelopments/2024/insights-into-the-new-employment-rights-bill-protection-against-harassment-in-the-workplace> - This source explains the extension of workplace harassment protection, including sexual harassment by third parties, under the Employment Rights Bill, and notes the importance of employer due diligence.
* <https://www.phb.co.uk/article/clearly-a-course-of-actionlabour-seeking-to-make-employers-liable-for-third-party-harassment/> - This article supports the contention that making employers liable for third-party harassment could be controversial, particularly regarding customer interactions and the impact on free speech in public settings.