**Liberal Party’s fingerprints all over attempt to link independent MP Dr Monique Ryan to the Chinese Communist Party**

In the dying days of a flagging election campaign, the Liberal Party is using xenophobia to try to win back the seat of Kooyong from independent Dr. Monique Ryan. A story in Nine Newspapers (28/04/25) alleges two ethnically Chinese volunteers for her campaign handed out pre-poll how to votes under the direction of a Chinese Communist Party-linked group.

In support of its story, The Age relies on comments from Liberal Senator James Paterson, a self-described China “wolverine”.

Says Robert Barwick, Australian Citizens Party Senate candidate for Victoria, “The Liberal Party’s fingerprints are all over this attempt to smear an independent who holds a once safe Liberal seat, and Australian Chinese voters.

“For Nine Newspapers to rely on ‘dial a quote’ Senator Paterson smacks of bias and sloppy journalism. He is a bigot and it’s rank hypocrisy that he singles out supporters of Dr. Ryan while his leader, Peter Dutton and former Liberal prime ministers John Howard and Tony Abbott appear in numerous Chinese language social media posts soliciting votes from the Chinese Australian community.”

The allegations against the Ryan campaign, its Chinese Australian volunteers and indirect links to the CCP is not supported by any facts. A video lifted from social media shows two campaign volunteers, interviewed in both English and Chinese, declaring their support for Ryan was based on her policies.

A woman in the video says in English “friends told me she [Dr Ryan] is very good” and later in Chinese she mentions that community leader Mr. Ji Jianmin told her to support Ryan. The other person in the video, a man, says unambiguously his support is based on Dr. Ryan’s policies.

Nine Newspapers did not seek comment from Mr Ji, nor provide any proof he has ever been engaged in foreign interference. The story points to research from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) that the group Mr Ji is the president of, the Australian Hubei Association, is part of the “CCP”-linked United Front Work Department.

However, nowhere in ASPI’s major report on the United Front is there any reference to the Hubei Association.

Says Mr. Barwick, “Nine Newspapers has deliberately taken comments from a Ryan volunteer out of context and backed that up with quotes from ‘analysts’ linked to the Liberal Party, notorious for playing fast and loose with the truth.”

One is Alex Joske, who worked as a researcher for the defence and US government-funded ASPI and was hired by former Liberal ministerial adviser Peter Jennings.

The other, academic John Fitzgerald is an extensive ASPI contributor appointed by a Liberal government to the board of the National Foundation for Australian China Relations.

Says Mr Barwick, “Quoting these two, and Senator Paterson’s call for an investigation by ASIO and the AFP, smacks of McCarthyism. Why did Nine Newspapers not seek comment from a legal expert as to whether Paterson’s call for an investigation had any basis in law?

“This story is a Liberal Party hit job and they’ve already been caught out running scare campaigns against Chinese voters with a two-minute video from Reid candidate Grange Chung circulated on Chinese social media claiming Labor was solely responsible for the White Australia Policy.

“It’s a Liberal Party united front casting suspicion over the loyalties of Chinese Australians who don’t fall into line with their candidates.”

The Citizens Party stands by all Chinese-Australians and their right to participate in our democratic process without facing baseless, and racist, accusations that they are acting under the influence of a foreign power.

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