

Minister Patel is the nightmare that haunts South Africa

Dean Macpherson MP - DA Shadow Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition

Chairperson,

They say that a crisis reveals a person's true ability to lead and hasn't that been very true for Minister Ebrahim Patel.

At the beginning of this pandemic, the DA and myself pledged to support and assist Minister Patel and this government in a response to President Cyril Ramaphosa's call to put party politics aside and put the country first.

I genuinely believed that Minister Patel would also uphold his end of the Presidents call but the truth is, he has spent everyday since then doing exactly the opposite.

Minister Patel has used the State of Disaster to try and win favour within the ANC by implementing plans and policies that would even make communists in the Kremlin blush.

And all of this was done at the expense of hard working South Africans.

From his flip flops on E-commerce where he believed he was the sole arbiter of fairness, to desperately relying on Minister of Zol and Alcohol, Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma to curing his legal nightmare after he decided to ban the sale of hot food, thereby making life even more difficult for frontline healthcare workers who rely on the sale of hot food after hours, to his crazy and insulting regulations on what clothes people can buy and how they should wear them.

It was like Minister Patel was determined to make himself a national lampoon. You really have exceeded expectations and are a lampoon emeritus.

Minister Patel has displayed complete ignorance when it comes to understanding how an economy works. That you can simply designate a percentage of workers for a factory line to return to work would make a first year economics student embarrassed.

Under his watch, he has left low income South Africans to fend for themselves by approaching loan-sharks to find credit.

The DA wrote a comprehensive proposal on how the Minister could make credit available to millions of people who needed it the most by invoking section 11 of the National Credit Act, that was in April.

To date, the Minister has steadfastly refused to even engage us on this proposal.

So what has he done instead?

Minister Patel has commissioned a secret plan to use the Disaster Management Act and strong-arm credit lenders to expunge the credit records of South Africans retrospectively from the 1st of April until the state of disaster ends.

While this may seem like an act of altruism from Minister Patel, what he will do is increase the cost of credit and access to credit for South Africans as lenders will simply refuse to make funds available if there is no recourse to people who can't repay their debts.

And Minister Patel will do this all by bypassing Parliament and legislation which should be rejected by every Member of Parliament and the credit providers.

But why would he do all of this? It's simple, Minister Patel has to reach into the populist pit of ideas to repair his battered public image.

What better way than to mislead the public that they can lend money, not pay it back and do so without consequences.

Minister Patel has also been very quiet on the alcohol ban.

Do you support it Minister? Do you support President Ramaphosa using the workers in this industry as pawns for your government's complete failure to build healthcare capacity in every Province outside of the Western Cape?

I am also told that multinational companies in the alcohol industry have been trying to secure meetings with you only to be rebuffed at every opportunity. Why is this?

Let me tell you some home truths Minister, you and your party have got us into this mess before we even got into the Covid pandemic.

The truth is, for as long as President Ramaphosa and Minister Patel have a job, millions more will never find one.

That you and President Ramaphosa believe that the ANC government should be at the forefront of our economic recovery is wrong, misguided and suicidal.

It's time to get out of the way and let businesses, big and small lead the way to economic growth.

Stop chocking them with your soviet styled regulations and red tape, and stop using BBBEE as a front for corruption to enrich the politically connected and Covid-tenderpreneurs.

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