(mic and crowd noise)

[00:10]

Dr. Ewart F. Brown (PLP):  
Mr. Speaker, to a certain extent, uh, today’s debate reminds me of a championship boxing match. I don’t mean to trivialize it at all, but it does remind me of the days of old when the 400 meter final was being called, and the coaches used to refer to it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as crunch time. Well, we are now in crunch time. [00:40] Crunch time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that time when most of the talking is over, the lobbying, thank God, stopped, (laughter) and we politicians are forced to face the music. And as a relative newcomer to the talk, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want you to know that I would miss crunch time for all the rice in China. (laughter) [1:10]

Audience Member:  
(not miked, inaudible)

(break in audio)

[1:15]

Dr. Ewart F. Brown (PLP):
I think that during this debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have been treated to a number of interesting developments. Because there are sides in the debate, each side is preparing for the eventual victory, and whenever men and women are pitted against each other and one side intends to win, it usually becomes a case of winning at any and all cost. [1:45] And so sometimes during this debate we have heard issues debated, although I’m not sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that they are truly the issues on the table. We have heard, for example, a lot of talk about homosexuality, and my colleague [I don’t?] remember from (inaudible) East, Dr. Stubbs, has given correct and succinct evidence that homosexuality is more and more [2:15] being established as being biologically based. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, let’s talk for just a moment in very common terms about homosexuality. One thing for sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that homosexuality does not confine itself. It’s similar to some other phenomena. It does not restrict itself to any one [2:45] socioeconomic group or to any particular, uh, uh, race or to any, uh, professional group, and believe it or not, uh, Mr. Deputy Speaker, homosexuality does not remain outside the church. Uh, homosexuality goes inside the church, comes outside the church. It is everywhere, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and so in order to have a full appreciation of this phenomenon that we’re
debating today we need to understand [3:15] the global and widespread nature of this phenomenon, homosexuality.

My friend in the church and Mr. Deputy Speaker, I consider many of the people, most of the people who have lobbied me directly and indirectly, I consider them to be my friends. My friends in the church have written a great deal. [3:45] They have prayed a great deal. They have marched a great deal. They’ve given us a documentary film, [free of charge?], and they have lobbied heavily, and for that I commend them. This is a participatory democracy and all segments who wish to have an impact on the thinking of this body are encouraged to participate vigorously. [4:15] But I know that if, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the same God who directed my friends in the church to do these things for this issue, that that same God will guide them after this debate is over, that that same God will have my friends in the church write vigorously about the racism which drips from every 2x4 in this country. I want my friends [4:45] in the church to join me and pray for our education system, which spreads self-hatred at a rate much faster than homosexuals might spread AIDS. I want my friends in the church to march around this house in the name of their church members whose children may be arrested and detained unnecessarily. I pray that God will guide my friends to produce documentary friends on the homeless or the
unemployable. [5:15] I want them to lobby the members of this house on other issues, as well, because that’s what participatory democracy is all about. But please, to my friends in the church, please do not limit your energetic responses and your creative tension to the issue of sex. Please do not do that. There’s already too much sex and not enough love [5:45] in this world. I want to see activism, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for pleasure, to see activism in any level in Bermuda, and I don’t mind if the church walks around this building every day that we are here and not here, but I want to see some activism on some of the more widespread issues and some of the issues that do not revolve around sex.

Mr. Speaker, this issue [6:15] is, in fact, a fundamental human rights issue. It’s not a sexual issue. I’ve spent many years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, fighting against discrimination, and this is a form of discrimination. To send the homosexual to jail and to set the fornicator or the adulterer free is discrimination of the most glaring kind. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this almost [6:45] became a difficult issue for me, and I’ll tell you why. When this debate initially, uh, hit the media it was clear to me that some of its strongest proponents, the proponents of this bill, were my sworn enemies. And I said, well, if they are for it
maybe I should be against it. But Mr. Deputy Speaker, leaders must be made [7:15] (inaudible).

(members agree loudly)

We cannot simply be on the side of something because our sworn enemies are taking another position. My word is 'enemy.' Some of the people, some of the people, Mr. Deputy Speaker -- you see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I prefer the language of clarity and honesty because I believe that some of the things that I’ve seen in the media in this country -- and that’s not including the last four or five days; let’s take that out -- [7:45] some of the things I have seen in the media in this country indicate to me, Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, that I can refer to some of these people as my sworn enemies. They have done the swearing. But human rights, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an issue which demands some toughness. One does not take easy positions for human rights. If one cannot speak in support [8:15] of the human rights of one’s opponent, then one does not support human rights. It is very important to understand that when people like Dr. King and others emerged out of the pack, they emerged because they took a higher ground, and they commanded, they attended to a moral position. Mr. Speaker, Deputy Speaker, to speak in support of those with whom we vigorously disagree [8:45] is an important element in the struggle for human rights,
and it is not quite the same, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as turning the other cheek.

As a physician, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there’s another element which interests me. I have listened to some speak on this issue and say, “Well, let’s relate it to AIDS,” [9:15] because, you see, that’s a very easy --

**Member:**


**Dr. Ewart F. Brown (PLP):**

[9:18] -- and convenient way to achieve the objective, and I don’t blame those people who take that position for taking it in the interest of winning the battle, but it must also be exposed for what it is.

(members agree loudly)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been said by some who oppose this bill that those people who have AIDS [9:48] and are suffering are the victims of their own folly and their own incorrect and evil and sinful activities, and therefore they should be cast aside. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the essence and the epitome of intolerance, and if I were to search
for tolerance, the first place I would look, Mr. Deputy Speaker, [10:18] would be in the church.

Member:
[10:19] In the church.

Dr. Ewart F. Brown (PLP):

[10:20] In the mosque, in the temple. I would look in the church, because I was taught that if there was any place where aberrant or different behavior would be tolerated, understood, prayed for, and forgiven, it would be in the church.

(members, loud noise)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a physician, am I to say to the young man [10:50] who is lying in the emergency room with a skull fracture, “You were speeding, you know better than to have been speeding, and therefore I have no compassion for you?” Am I to say to the alcoholic whose liver has now turned to a pad of fat, “You got there by your own devices [made for you?]?” No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must be made of sterner stuff.

(loud “mm-hmm!”, many voices)

Those of us who are called to have compassion must demonstrate, whether we agree with the mechanism [11:20] which led to the unfortunate circumstances or not, and I think that we shortchange ourselves as human beings when we start withdrawing
compassion because we disagree with the lifestyle of the sufferer. A society which cannot tolerate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, differences among its citizens is destined to become more and more repressive. [11:50] It’s the easy way out --

**Member:**

[11:52] Oh yes!

**Dr. Ewart F. Brown (PLP):**

[11:53] -- when you cannot tolerate differences, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me just say in closing that in my humble opinion, Bermuda is repressive enough.

(loud yeses, many voices)

Let us work hard for human rights. Thank you.

**END OF FILE**