

Westminster – Edinburgh Labour MPs accused of inaction on tax

✘ *SNP SAY EDINBURGH MPS' CREDIBILITY IN QUESTION AFTER TAX CUT NO-SHOW*

Labour's credibility is severely in question after the party MPs abstained in a vote, forced by the SNP and Plaid Cymru, opposing Tory plans to cut the top rate of tax for the highest earners, according to the SNP.

The party say that despite vocal opposition and several pledges from shadow chancellor Ed Balls to vote against the measure, in an embarrassing no-show Labour MPs failed to vote against the measure in the Commons. The Government won the vote on the 45p rate by 319 to 22, a majority of 297.

All four Edinburgh Labour MPs: Sheila Gilmore, Mark Lazarowicz, Ian Murray and even former chancellor Alistair Darling failed to turn up to vote against the millionaire's tax cut on Monday evening.

✘ Commenting Edinburgh Central MSP Marco Biagi said:-


"After claiming they opposed the Tories tax cut for millionaires and tax hike for pensioners, Labour's MPs have gone AWOL as soon as a vote is called.

"Since the Budget, Ed Balls has been in and out of television studios blustering about the Chancellor's tax plans and promising to oppose them – but at the first opportunity to vote against this unfair Tory plan and Labour abstain. Edinburgh Labour MPs are letting the Tories off the hook. Yet again they have put their tribal dislike of the SNP ahead of the interests of the people they are supposed to represent.

“While Labour capitulate, the SNP will keep working for a better way than the Tories’ unfair Budget, which punishes pensioners and public sector workers and does nothing to deliver jobs and recovery.

“This was not a budget for Scotland and is proof of the urgent need for Scotland to have control over our own finances with independence.”

But when The Reporter contacted one of the Edinburgh MPs mentioned, Ian Murray MP for Edinburgh South, it seems that this is not what actually happened yesterday.

Ian Murray said:-“This is typical from the SNP. They were  absent from the whole of the budget debate and made no contribution whatsoever, whilst Scottish Labour MPs defended Scotland by expressing their strong views against the millionaires tax cut.

“Former Chancellor Alistair Darling made a significant contribution to that debate. The SNP turned up at the very last minute and proposed a vote on all personal allowances, including the 20p and 40p rates. There was no procedural mechanism to vote against a specific measure like the 50p tax rate last night. For avoidance of doubt, Labour voted against the whole Budget.

“But there was no opportunity to have a vote specifically on 50p tax cut. Scottish Labour will ensure there are amendments made in the Finance Bill where it is possible to place amendments, and vote against. The SNP really need to start standing up for their constituents and Scotland against this Tory Government, rather than this constant politics of grievance and political games. They are plain wrong.”