

## ECONOMY, ENERGY AND FAIR WORK COMMITTEE

### PROTECTION OF WORKERS (RETAIL AND AGE-RESTRICTED GOODS AND SERVICES) (SCOTLAND) BILL

**SUBMISSION FROM** Lynn Freebairn

#### **1. What are your views on the Bill and what impact will it have?**

This bill is a great idea. I work in retail and this would make me feel more secure doing my job. If something happened my employer would have to call the police and not just let them go. Public sector workers have this support so why shouldn't private workers have the same.

#### **2. Having regard to existing offences (e.g. common law assault), is there a need for a new statutory offence of assaulting, threatening, abusing, obstructing or hindering a retail worker?**

No one should experience violence, threats or abuse at their place of work. Retail workers should be free from fear at their place of work.

Politicians have rightly made decisions such as Minimum Unit Pricing or Challenge 25 which mean that retail workers are enforcing the law. Retail workers should be given the same protections as other law enforcement officers when they are enforcing the law. Some of the laws and regulations which have been made make the situation worse for retail workers and this is why there is a need for a new statutory offence.

#### **3. What are the potential benefits or problems in having such an offence?**

The potential benefit of the having such an offence is that it will act as a deterrent.

#### **4. Should any new offence include all of the elements proposed in the Bill (e.g. should obstructing or hindering a retail worker be a crime, as is already the case in relation to various providers of emergency services)?**

Yes, the new offence should include all the elements proposed in the Bill such as obstructing a retail worker.

#### **5. Is the focus on retail workers appropriate (e.g. is it too narrow in not covering other workers who may, because of their work, be vulnerable to abusive behaviour)?**

The focus on retail workers is appropriate. The shopworkers union USDAW has made clear that retail workers are more and more becoming victims of violence, threats and abuse.

#### **6. What difference will the proposed aggravation, where the enforcement of a statutory age restriction is involved, make?**

Scottish politicians have rightly made a focus on applying age restrictions on the sale of alcohol a priority. Whilst politicians sit at home it is retail workers who are on the front line of this asking for proof of age and being on the receiving end of violence, threats and abuse. I

believe that this proposed aggravation would serve as a deterrent.

**7. What are the financial implications of the proposals?**

**8. What other action is or should be taken to protect retail and other workers?**

**9. Are there any other aspects of the Bill you would like to comment on?**