

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM MATT GIBSON

Dr Stuart Waiton is a senior lecturer in sociology and criminology at the University of Abertay, and an ally of the newly-launched Free to Disagree campaign. He has said the Bill might “possibly be the most intolerant piece of legislation in any liberal democracy, worldwide”.

Writing in The Herald, Dr Waiton said: “Unlike the laws in the rest of the UK, where the crime of ‘stirring up’ hatred needs evidence that it is deliberate and also threatening, here we have a new law that potentially requires neither.

He explained that simply being ‘abusive’, even unintentionally, could become a crime, which is particularly dangerous given that the term is “incredibly flexible and subjective”.

The idea that we could be stopped and even prosecuted for quoting the scripture of the Bible (or other religions which have negative views on e. G. homosexuality is a clear violation of fundamental human right of freedom of speech.

This legislation will close down free discussion of contentious subjects which is the very basis of democracy.

I would urge you to consider carefully supporting this invasive and dangerous legislation.

Matt Gibson
23 July 2020