

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ROBERT KENNEDY

I wish to register my total disagreement with this ill-conceived, poorly-drafted and divisive piece of proposed legislation. It is clearly designed to criminalise free speech and restrict religious freedom, as evidenced by the absence of any safeguards to protect these long-established democratic and humanitarian rights.

The bill's provisions mean that it is only necessary for an individual to complain of being offended for the so-called perpetrator to be charged, without any regard for the veracity of any comment. One can only assume that it is being proposed for political reasons, and that any future criticism of the SNP, for example, could be treated as a hate crime, given how sensitive members of this party are to disagreement, far less criticism. If this scenario seems unlikely, one has only to consider the behaviour of SNP politicians during the Brexit negotiations in appropriating existing legislation designed for a different purpose to challenge the UK Government's proposals for an example of how this SNP administration will resort to any device to further their totalitarian agenda.

Robert Kennedy
18 July 2020