

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM GEORGE HAY

Dear Sir/Madam,

I wish to express my opposition to the proposed Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill as currently drafted.

The Bill is troubling on a number of levels, but primarily with regard to the following points:

- The concept of 'stirring up' seems ill-defined and subjective
- The notion that intent is not required is alarming, and surely opens the door to vexatious accusations
- The 'free speech' clauses do not offer adequate protection to reasonable debate
- If I have understood the proposed Bill correctly, it would apply to conversations taking place at home. Surely this is redolent of Orwell's '1984'?

I note that point 190 of the Policy Memorandum regarding the proposed Bill acknowledges that a substantial majority of respondents to the consultation paper on the Bill were opposed to both the concept of 'hate crime' and the proposal to introduce offences relating to certain protected characteristics or groups. As with the Named Persons legislation it seems that the Scottish Government is determined to ignore the views of the public and introduce another flawed and authoritarian piece of legislation, which poses a grave threat to the intellectual freedom of the nation.

George Hay
18 July 2020