

## **JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

### **HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL**

#### **SUBMISSION FROM LEE TAYLOR**

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the newly proposed hate speech policy.

Our society has developed into the gem it is under the rights to express ones views an opinions freely. How can we determine what is a good idea if we can't discuss it? How can people with what might be considered backwards views develop their minds in the absence of communication? As long as there is no incitement to violence or harassment, opinions are harmless. There are already protections in place for incitement to violence and harassment.

The most worrying component of the proposal is the lack of clarity on what exactly defines hate speech. In the rapidly changing society we live in, i'm sure you're very aware of the problems faced by anyone not towing what appears to be the popular line. People losing careers, opportunities and even friends for wrongthink. With such vague definitions and being so open to interpretation, this is a very slippery slope into authoritarianism.

This is also further promoting the "Grouping" of society. Protected individuals in special boxes, nurturing the seeds of division which have been sown and are shooting for the skies. We really have/had made so much progress with the rights and respect of different sexualities and acceptance of minority groups in the last 40 years, let's try and continue to tie up the loose ends without overreaching and destroying it all.

We need governments to inject reason into the madness that has become modern society, not pander to and encourage it. The highly vocal minority is not the majority. In my experience, genuine racists and homophobes are like hens teeth in our society. Do you really believe we actually need these laws? I can say something with no ill intent which someone takes offence at and suddenly i'm a criminal? Who decides? What happened to banter? What happened to the individual. Does everyone have a right to wield the sword of hate speech law over others except me, a white male? Is that not racist and sexist?

This is not what you were elected for and a complete abuse of power. This is not what the police are for.

Freedom of expression is a basic human right.

Lee Taylor  
19 July 2020