

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM LINDA SIMPSON**

Dear Committee,

I am writing to voice my concern regarding the plans to introduce a new offence of stirring up of hatred in the Hate Crime and Public Order Bill. There seems to be inadequate free speech protection particularly for religious beliefs and views on morality. Where is the protection for preachers preaching the gospel of Christ, which could be regarded as "stirring up of hatred"? Surely this may prevent people from talking about what they believe in which would be equally true for atheists as well as religious people. And doesn't the existing criminal law already cover aggressive, either physical or verbal, behaviour which could cause fear or alarm. Thank you for allowing me a voice on this matter.

Linda Simpson  
19 July 2020