

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM MARGARET AND IAN LOVETT

Dear Committee Members

My husband and I have been considering your proposed *Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Order Bill* and its effects, and we disagree with some aspects of what you are planning to put into legislation.

Of course, it is right to 'limit threatening behaviour intended to stir up hatred' and to prevent 'rabble rousing' but it is wrong to shut down and criminalise 'rational argument'. We applaud the 'right to free speech' as recommended by Lord Bracadale (2017).

As SMP's you have a pivotal role in society: we the electorate vote a government to power to help maintain law and order, among other duties, but not to limit our free speech nor to try to control how we think. Next, the 'Thought Police' will plan to produce an app. to detect 'Unacceptable Thinking'!

By exploring, expressing freely and, above all, debating and discussing a whole spectrum of ideas, beliefs, prejudices and attitudes, a balanced opinion can be achieved. Surely the best form of education for life!

We are proud of the fact that as Scots we have had Freedom of Thought and Freedom of Speech! In travelling around we have visited many different countries and in many places we explained the freedom that we have in Scotland. Freedom to agree or disagree with authorities, as our consciences or thinking dictated. The 'law of the land' protected the people - or was it the Law of God?- and there was a general consensus of 'right and wrong' and 'true and false'.

Now we are beginning to feel unsafe to express a view in our own country (or can we still call it that?). I would like to continue to live in a country where I have the 'freedom not to have to self-censor'.

Surely, in these days of pandemic, the Government can concentrate on more productive areas than oppressive legislation which wastes police time and depresses its people.

Kind Regards,

Margaret and Ian Lovett
19 July 2020