

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM JULIE McNAUGHTON

Hi

I would like to raise some concerns over the proposed Scotland Hate Crime Bill which could criminalise speech purely because some people may find it offensive - a factor which is entirely subjective. Scotland already has, as it should, strong legislation in place to criminalise hate speech. Whilst I feel this bill is well meaning, to protect freedom of speech in Scotland the clauses relating to free speech must be amended to make it clear in no uncertain terms that people are able to discuss, criticise and refute ideas, beliefs and practices. This is imperative so that Scotland can remain a free and tolerant society where subjects such as religion can be debated, and the arts, academia and the media are free to challenge existing ideas.

Thanks for reading.

Best regards

Julie McNaughton
20 July 2020