

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM JAMES MACINNES**

I wish to make the following submission to your consultation.

in answer to Q6

the bill in its present form does not provide robust free speech causes to permit legitimate debate - but makes it possible, and probable that the bill will compel a sinister conformity with prevailing political social trends, because to challenge such would be to hazard prosecution for an aggravated offence. This will not promote or create a robust society as those drawing up the legislation claim to be inspired by, rather it will have a corrosive impact upon minority and majority groups in society. It will encourage a grievance culture. It will encourage the idea of victimhood and in this way do a great disservice to those it sets out to protect. Criticism and disagreement does not equate to hatred.

I am a Christian minister and the proposed bill makes it likely that a malicious complainant could accuse me of hatred for simply stating established Christian doctrine, and perhaps for even simply reading parts of the Bible. There must be a free speech clause that permits freedom of thought, speech and expression. This Bill is a threat to the wellbeing of society.

James MacInnes  
20 July 2020