

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM FARQUHAR RENWICK

Dear Sir/Madam

I write in response to your request for views on the proposed Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. I am opposed to this Bill and in particular I have grave reservations about the issue of the 'Stirring up of hatred.'

We live in the mother of democracies and one of the founding principles of our society is the right of free speech. Irrespective of whether someone else agrees with us or not one should always have the right of freedom of expression.

Hatred is such a subjective thing and one wonders who is going to define it. What's more, someone might do or say something without any malice or hatred intended and find themselves facing the wrath of the law. It's a bold individual who is going to say they can get into the mind of a person and spell out what their actual motives were for actually doing or saying something.

One wonders what will be made of this Bill in the event of it being hijacked on religious or moral grounds. Clearly some might deem a particular view on transgenderism, homosexuality, the uniqueness of the claims of Jesus Christ or such like to be hatred or the stirring up of hatred. This ought never be allowed on our society.

In a free society there must always be room for legitimate debate. This Bill doesn't in my view secure that and therefore ought to be opposed.

Farquhar Renwick
21 July 2020