

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM EWAN ROSS**

Though the bill undoubtedly has the best of intentions I would like to make a few comments regarding part 6 of the bill and the danger to freedom of speech.

Stirring up offences

6. Do you have views on the merits of Part 2 of the Bill and the plans to introduce a new offence of stirring up hatred?

Comments

Police Scotland have said that free speech clauses are important to stop police being swamped with concocted reports from politically motivated people who will try to silence opposition by classing a difference of opinion as hatred.

No new law is needed as present criminal law already covers abusive or threatening behaviour likely to cause fear or alarm. The mere threat of prosecution for stirring up hatred might cause people to keep silent. This is a subtle threat to freedom of speech and a free society.

Ewan Ross  
20 July 2020