

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ROSEMARY SLOAN

I am concerned these additions to hate crime laws in Scotland will undermine free speech regarding religion or belief.

Some people are so committed to their beliefs that nothing more than a robust assertion that their beliefs are false will be taken as abusive. Therefore, if we wish to apply criminal sanctions to protect people from feeling "abused" when someone criticises or attacks their beliefs, it is obvious that the beliefs themselves as well as the individual who feels insulted or abused are being protected.

People should be protected by law, but beliefs should not.

We already have protection in law for those who feel "fear and alarm" or "distress" about the way they have been spoken to. This legislation is unnecessary. In my opinion, it is divisive and will lead to time wasting in the courts and a big waste of public funds.

Rosemary Sloan
20 July 2020