

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM HEATHER SOUTHWICK

Thank you for the opportunity to voice views on this proposed Bill.
There are two areas I would like to address.

This Bill while purporting to bring more protection for those who are 'offended' actually opens the door to abuse. We are all offended at one time or another whether in greater ways or small. If this Bill is not amended the courts could be full with those who have malicious intent, or don't like what you stand for. It also brings fear on people as they necessarily are unaware they have offended and could live in real anxiety. A fear society is not a healthy nation. 'Offended' needs to be defined to stop abuse.

We have had freedom to practice religion in Scotland according to our beliefs. This Bill removes this protection and it needs to be reinstated.

I understand the need to protect the population from hate speech but there are laws which already protect people. This Bill is in danger of discriminating against ordinary people's views never intended to offend. Our freedom of speech is being eroded which is endangering our democratic freedoms.

It is imperative to safeguard these freedoms so Scotland can still be a 'free' country.

Heather Southwick
20 July 2020