

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM DEBBIE THOMAS

I am writing to object to the Hate Crime and Order Bill.

This bill is a direct threat to freedom of speech in Scotland. It is far too subjective, open to abuse and will shackle journalists, comedians, writers etc. We cannot restrict our arts and press sectors in this way and invoke a fear of self expression.

Furthermore are individuals to be subject to criminal charges purely because another individual has felt offence? Who will decide where 'stirring up hatred' starts and ends? Just because somebody is offended does not mean they are in the right. This will also no doubt lead to extensive increase in police and legal costs. This bill needs a serious rethink.

Free speech is ingrained in Scottish culture and must be protected.

Debbie Thomas
21 July 2020