

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ALAN WELSH

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing to comment on the proposed Hate Crime Bill, in particular questions 6.

Qu 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?

I believe the existing criminal law already covers threatening or abusive behaviour that is likely to cause fear or alarm, with this in place surely no new law is needed to cover stirring up of hatred which is very difficult to define and could easily be abused by someone who simply has a very strong opinion on a particular understanding of anything.

The independent review on Hate Crime report by Lord Bracadale, outlined the need for a clear distinction between legitimate debate and rabble rousing, unfortunately the Scottish Government's Bill does not come close to reflecting this.

The stirring up of hatred offence is very ambiguous and will cause more harm than good.

yours sincerely

Alan Welsh

Alan Welsh
20 July 2020