

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM PETER CAMPBELL

Dear Justice Committee,

I will be brief. I am not very pleased with the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill proposed.

I feel that it is criminalising speech and does not take into account satire, double-meanings, social interactions, fictional presentations, and is designed to criminalise speech over offense. Offense is not something that should be criminal between grown adults. There is no real way to show intent. Its always a supposition and is too vague an area for law. We can see that by any argument on any political issue. People can be hurt by what has been said but adults get over it. It becomes a criminal matter when there is persistent harassment or violence threatened. That should be the only time. Offense in itself is something that happens in everyday life and we all live with it. Criminalising offense is something that baby's culture and puts far too much power into the hands of the law when it comes to speech. We have already seen people arrested when it comes to bad taste, when the grown up reaction should simply to be disgusted by it and move on. Furthermore increased criminalisation of speech is something seen in weak cultures that drift towards authoritarian rule. I don't wish this for Scotland.

On a personal note, I suffer from mental health issues. I see multiple examples of ignorance on this area on a daily basis. I don't think ignorant comments should have anything to do with law enforcements in this area. I wish education to continue. With time the situation slowly improves. I think this approach can cover anything in the characteristics mentioned of (a) age, (b) disability, (c) race, colour, nationality (including citizenship), or ethnic or national origins, (d) religion or, in the case of a social or cultural group, perceived religious affiliation, (e) sexual orientation, (f) transgender identity, (g) variations in sex characteristics. In my lifetime these areas all have improved by education and having patient vigilance over time. Few people in culture stand by and let discrimination in any of these areas as we are a civilised country. People say stupid things at times, are shamed and apologise. People get the idea. People have improved tremendously over the past thirty years in all areas brought up.

I hope we do not go down the path of passing legislation on this area. We should show more faith in our people to improve by themselves. I fear this bill will cause more harm than help.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Campbell
20 July 2020