

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

**HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL**

**SUBMISSION FROM IAN KLEK**

Dear Justice Committee,

I would like to air my view concerning the **Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill**.

I have to wonder why the Scottish governing bodies present such outrageous proposals to the people, with this being the latest in a rushed and ill-thought out legislation.

I would argue that the current legislation is sufficient. In a time when people are already arrested for expressing their views<sup>(1)</sup>, extending a law that would make it even easier to arrest - such as unwittingly committing an offence, is a gross infringement of free speech. How could anyone speak about what they believe, whether religious or not - given that any heated topic will always cause someone to feel offended - when this law makes them liable to a criminal offence so easily given that this Bill will enable them to be accused of speaking in an "insulting manner"?

What disturbs me most is that you've commissioned at the expense of the taxpayer a review of conduct in Scotland, done by Lord Bracadale, and yet you've left out the most important recommendation to protect free speech through clearly distinguishing between "rational argument" and "rabble-rousing", and most importantly the right to speech that "protect expression which shock, offend and disturbs other people". This protection has been enshrined in law for many years and yet you are so bold as to try to eradicate it. This Bill must be thrown back into the toilet it was first drawn up and made stronger to protect people's freedom to express their views and vigorously challenge others.

Yours faithfully,

Ian Klek  
20 July 2020