

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM HAZEL LOGIE

To the members of the Justice Committee

I write to express my concern with regard to Question 6 on the consultation paper, which asks:

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 of hatred?

My concern is that there are already laws that legislate for the use of abusive or threatening behaviour, therefore there is not the need for another law.

Freedom of speech is a freedom we have long enjoyed in Scotland. It is a freedom for which many of our forefathers fought and some, even died. I find it sad that their sacrifice is viewed so lightly by so many politicians. It is the rich diversity of opinion and belief, including religious belief, that gives us the cultured debate enjoyed by our society and by the Scottish Parliament. Thus, the clause on religion should be stronger in order to protect more than just the act of debating or discussing, or even criticising. We need to protect the right to hold and to challenge religious beliefs.

It is my understanding that Lord Bracadale's Independent Review on Hate Crime, which has led to this Bill, emphasised the need to clearly distinguish between genuine debate and the inflaming of a situation for the sake of it; The Bill does not reflect this instruction.

Yours sincerely,

Hazel Logie
20 July 2020