

## **JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

#### **SUBMISSION FROM MARGARET BRUCE**

What exactly is hate crime?

This term is used too loosely these days.

If I say that Nicola Sturgeon does not do a good job, that is an opinion. No hate, no crime.

Even if I said that I disliked or even hated the First Minister, it would still not be a crime to express that opinion.

But, if I stirred up others to physically attack her, that would be a crime! Yes, a hate crime.

So, there should be freedom for all people to express strongly negative as well as positive opinions. Crime only enters the equation when one physically attacks or invites others to do so: or lies in order to blacken a disliked person's reputation.

For it to be a crime, there must be an intent to do harm.

I am concerned that Christians could be wrongfully accused of hate crime.

The Bible says that Jesus Christ is the only way to God; therefore other religions are false. A pastor or other Christian could be accused of hate crime for proclaiming this Biblical truth. But this would be a false accusation as no hatred is involved.

Homosexuality is condemned in the Bible and Christians are often accused of homophobia because they believe this truth. This is wrong. A phobia is an irrational fear! To believe that a homosexual lifestyle is sinful does not mean that we are afraid of homosexuals, nor do we hate them!

It is not a hate crime to stand outside abortion clinics and pray and try to persuade pregnant women not to murder their babies! It is love in action, love for the unborn.

I am concerned that Christians will be charged with hate crimes when they preach the Gospel and stand for truth. Christians who preach on the streets are already harassed by the police. This is wrong in a country that used to have free speech!

Muslims seem to have greater freedoms.....or, maybe the police fear them!? And yet, they are often responsible for murderous attacks and rape.

This country needs to go back to giving everyone the liberty of free speech and open debate without accusing people of hate crime just because we disagree with them! 😊

Margaret Bruce  
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