

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM DR CATHERINE LOBB**

Dear Sir,

I have grave concerns about the proposed Hate Crime Bill on the following grounds:

It will profoundly curtail freedom of speech.

Churches will be in danger of prosecution for publicly stating the Bible's teaching on marriage, gender and sexual morality and the uniqueness of Christ as the one true Saviour of all people.

Christians and other faith groups will be afraid to express their views in any public debate lest they be accused of stirring up hatred. There needs to be a clear distinction made between rabble rousing and legitimate debate as Lord Bracadale stressed in his Independent Review. The Bill in its current form comes nowhere near this standard.

The police will be inundated with vexatious complaints unless the Bill is clear on the difference between the intentional stirring up of hatred with the aim of causing harm and the freedom to express respectfully a personal view on ethics and religion.

Religious beliefs and views on morality are matters on which people can have vigorous debate and be free to change their minds: a democratic society must protect this basic human freedom.

Our existing criminal law already covers threatening or abusive behaviour likely to cause fear or alarm so no new law is needed: the proposed law in its present form will itself cause repression and intimidation.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Catherine Lobb  
22 July 2020