

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM LACHLAN MACLEOD

Question

Stirring up offences

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?

Answer

The new stirring up hatred offences are extremely dangerous to free speech.

Someone could be accused of having committed such an offence and the person being in absolutely no way whatsoever intending to stir up hatred.

Religious beliefs and views on morality are issues which people can have vigorous debate about. A free society must protect this.

People should be free to disagree with others on religious and moral issues and the right to disagree in debate must be protected

Surely existing criminal law already covers abusive and threatening behaviour which would be likely to cause fear and alarm, so there should be no new law required.

Lachlan M MacLeod

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13 July 2020