

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM ANNABEL MASON

To whom it may concern

I would like to raise my concern regarding the above Bill.

In no way do I encourage or endorse hatred in speech or any other manner towards another individual or groups of people.

I do however fear that this bill will lead to a loss of freedom of speech for us as a nation. Discussions may take place where people may say things that are mistakenly taken to be hatred or abuse when it is just to clarify an issue. We must be free to speak openly on issues. We are not robots and each individual has a mind of their own who can work their ways through issues in different ways.

Scotland is at risk of becoming an authoritarian state where we all have to act and think the same way and are not allowed to have open discussion. This country prides itself on openness to variety of cultures, religions and ideals.

Discussion on morality and religion can cause debate and we must be free to disagree amicably with each other without interpretation being made of this being hatred. We have to continue the freedom to do this.

Many religions will teach that their belief is the one correct way and we have enjoyed the freedom as a nation to practice this. Atheists are also free to state that they are correct. We run the risk of anyone who takes the slightest annoyance at another for disagreeing with them saying that the other is stirring up hatred. We are at risk of seeing Imams, Preachers and other religious leaders being prosecuted for preaching what they believe to be true to their religion.

Not all people will have the same view on same sex marriage or transgenderism and we cannot have a society which does not allow us to have open discussion on issues like this.

This is a bill which runs the risk of innocent discussion being blocked and those who are ardent in their own convictions taking offence easily and accusing others unnecessarily of stirring up hatred.

Please can you reconsider the passing of this bill or amend it in such a way that will allow this country to retain its Freedom of Speech and discussion.

Thank you for your attention

Annabel Mason

Annabel Mason
21 July 2020