

## **JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

#### **SUBMISSION FROM ELIZABETH CAMPBELL**

Having read the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill, I wish to submit the following views to the Justice Committee:

1. I appreciate and understand the need to bring together several bits of legislation regarding hate crimes.
2. However, I have concerns regarding Part 2 of the Bill and in particular the lack of definition as to what "stirring up hatred" means.
3. Existing legislation covering "threatening or abusive behaviour likely to cause fear or alarm" is of course a good thing in a society which protects all citizens from harm and violence. Such behaviour is clearly definable. But who will decide if a person has intended to "stir up hatred" by their words? Is it possible that those who never intended hatred are accused? Who will decide?
4. Race, age and disability are aspects of one's humanity which are set in stone and not debatable, but religion, sexual orientation and transgender identity are aspects of life where personal choice are involved and are therefore more fluid, with the possibility of change of mind.
5. Discussion and debate often take place regarding these three matters. Is this discussion to be halted for fear that one might be accused of "stirring up hatred" through having a different opinion?
6. Politically motivated people may accuse those who express disagreement with them of "stirring up hatred" and may use the legislation to silence discussion.
7. Freedom of speech must be protected and not closed down if Scotland is to remain a free and fair society. While there is a free speech clause in the bill, it is very weakly worded.

Thank-you for giving opportunity to express my views. It is this freedom of debate that makes Scotland great. Let's not impede that in any way.

Elizabeth Campbell  
22 July 2020