

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM GERARD MCGETTIGAN

Dear Justice Committee,

I have recently heard about the new bill that is being considered and am very concerned by it. It seems very vague and goes against simple facts while it endangers freedom of speech and our rights as citizens.

Certain discrimination based on age is surely required? Will we be able to treat children like they are younger and less knowledgeable still? Will we be able to offer old people a seat or help crossing the road? Or will we avoid it in case they happen to “perceive” that as hateful towards their age?

Perception seems to be key throughout the entire bill. This seems to divorce the issue from the intentions of the person being accused and instead is based only on what bystanders and the insulted party “perceived” to be the case.

This is simply an unacceptable bill. Any self respecting lawyer would call this bill poorly thought out and open to horrendous abuse in the courts. Hate crime laws currently in effect are already too easily abused and this will simply make it far easier in Scotland.

I expect to see more simple comedians and ordinary well meaning people, who aren't fully up to date on all the latest groups of people who may take offence to ordinary language, charged under this law whenever someone decides they dislike what they have said. This allows very Orwellian powers to the state and anyone with a solid left leaning set of beliefs.

Please stop this bill.

Kind regards,

Gerard Christopher McGettigan

Gerard McGettigan
7 July 2020