

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM JOHN PATON

To whom it may concern

Having read through the brief I have concerns over question 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?

The basis of my concern are religious beliefs and views on morality are matters on which people can have vigorous debate and change their minds. As a free society we must protect this.

An example of this as church services are not excluded could be where Christ is preached as the only Saviour and all religions are said to be false, or where homosexual behaviour is said to be sinful, could see the preacher prosecuted for stirring up hatred.

Lord Bracadale's Independent Review on Hate Crime report, which led to the Scottish Government's Bill, stressed the need for a clear distinction between legitimate debate and rabble rousing.

The Bill does not come close to reflecting this

Yours sincerely

John Paton
08 July 2020