

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM MARK JASPER

I wish to register my opposition to the formulation of the new Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill.

This bill will have a devastating effect on our society's freedom of speech. It opens up the real possibility for any disagreement to be labelled hatred and criminalised. This proposed bill is both draconian and totalitarian in nature.

The bill as it stands will lead to greater fear of expressing opinions and ideas across the population. The equivalent bills in England and Wales both contain protection of the freedom to disagree and to hold religious and political views which some may find offensive. This bill threatens to silence the expressing of views even if those views are neither threatening nor intended to stir up hatred.

The independent review chaired by Lord Bracadale stressed the need for a clear distinction between legitimate debate and "rabble rousing". This bill provides no such distinction in any adequate sense. Again, the English and Welsh equivalents provide these.

This bill is unnecessary to improve police powers to maintain law and order and ought to be rejected in anything like its current form.

Yours Faithfully.

Mark Jasper
08 July 2020