

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM ROSS FINLAY**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I regard this bill as the most serious threat to free speech that has ever been proposed.

This bill does not provide the protection that comparable legislation in England and Wales does and this is what makes it dangerous. I do not think there is a need for this bill as I consider the present laws as sufficient to deal with this issue.

I wish to comment in particular on question 6:

People must be able to debate their views on religious and moral issues in a free society. This bill could prevent that happening. Our law currently covers threatening or abusive behaviour which is likely to cause fear.

Church services or open air gatherings are not excluded .A minister who is being faithful to the Bible and says that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour or that homosexual behaviour is sinful could be prosecuted for stirring up hatred.

The law should only cover threatening behaviour ,not abusive behaviour as this is subjective. The free speech clause on religion and sexual orientation must be stronger so that people are able to have vigorous debate on these matters.

With regard to transgender issues there must be freedom to use a person's birth name and pronoun and to say that someone born a woman cannot be a man and vice versa.

Free speech clauses are important and Police Scotland are concerned enough to make this point.

In its current form, this bill would create a culture of fear where people would be afraid to express their beliefs.

This would put us on the path to being a totalitarian state.

The Government need to think again on this one.

Kind regards,

Ross Finlay  
09 July 2020UUU