

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM CHRIS MAPLE

I am responding to your call for views on the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill. I make the following points:

1. There are fundamental freedoms which must be upheld in law, including freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of conscience and freedom of religion. The Bill must uphold these.
2. Everyone is entitled to form their own opinion and to express that opinion, in public as well as in private. The law must uphold and protect this right.
3. People do not have a right to go through life not hearing opinions they disagree with, even if they feel hurt or offended by those opinions.
4. The law must not restrict the fundamental freedoms listed above by giving precedence to some supposed right to protect people from being offended.
5. The law must not be partisan. It must not favour a particular view point or world view above others.
6. Terms such as 'prejudiced' and 'bigoted' are commonly used to label people who do not agree with some 'politically correct' view point. The law must not follow this practice.
7. Similarly, the term 'hate speech' is commonly used to label opinions which do not conform to what is 'politically correct' when in reality they are simply opinions. The law must not follow this practice.
8. Expressing an opinion about the nature of sexuality does not constitute 'hate speech' and the law must not treat it as such. For example, most people who are Christians think that humans were created male and female and that heterosexuality is normal and, therefore, anything else is not normal. Their right to express this view in public must be upheld by the law. This is not 'hate speech' and the law must not label it as such. The rights to freedom of speech and freedom of religion must be not overridden by someone claiming to be offended.
9. The law must not compel people to say things which they believe to be untrue. For example, if a person has the physical characteristics of a man but claims to be a woman, nobody must be compelled to refer to that person with female pronouns.

Chris Maple
08 June 2020