

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM SAMUEL-DAVID SMILLIE

Dear Justice Committee,

It has come to my attention that the hate crime bill is being updated to include new laws.

I am writing to you to protest any further additions to the Law as I believe the application of this law will be abused by particular people who will use this to defend against criticism.

As a member of the LGBT community, I understand many people are often upset by some abuse we receive, however I also believe that many people of the community have abused the intended use of the law and have attempted to use it to silence individuals who do not fully conform to particular social or political views. I have often been called a straight man lying as a bisexual man, along with being called a homophobe, only because I did not appreciate others political opinions representing me.

I also have concerns with the inclusion of Ageism, as I believe older generations will abuse this when they feel merely disrespected by younger generations. It may also be the case that youth use the law when they do not like the outdated attitudes of the elderly.

I believe in full, that criminalizing words, even the most awful words and phrases possible, is a bad move as what we say is almost always contextual in nature, therefore to criminalise particular speech would be to declare that if someone merely feels that words or phrases may in any way be discriminatory, they can be an steerable offense, and I do not feel the taxes my family has paid for years of their life, should be used in such minor offenses, with the police force already stretched thin.

If we want to stop true discrimination, we must be willing to communicate with the people who hold these views, talk to them and discuss the issue, be respectful in how we argue but also willing to tell them when there is a flaw in their logic. We must also allow them to come into contact with those they discriminate against. people will be more willing to be tolerant if they have come to include people of different bodies, sexes, races, specialities and other such differences.

I hope I have been truly heard and that we can work on making more decent people in the world.

I hope the person reading this has a lovely and peaceful week.

Samuel-David Smillie
13 July 2020