

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM MRS ELMA YOUNG

Response to the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Bill

I wish to respond to Question 6 of the above bill *Do you have views on the merits of Part 2 of the Bill and the plans to introduce a new offence of stirring up hatred?*

I am very concerned about this offence of stirring up hatred. It seems to be that no actual hatred needs to result. Also the person who is accused of stirring up hatred may not intend to do so or even realise that their behaviour is abusive or likely to stir up hatred. It may depend entirely on the perception of the victim which can be a dangerous thing.

Also this Bill is in danger of affecting people who wish to declare their beliefs – for example - on the what the Bible states thus shutting down free speech. Conversely people, Christian or otherwise, may become afraid to speak out on what they believe in case they fall foul of this law. Many Christians believe for example, that the Bible teaches that salvation is only found in Jesus and also that same sex relationships are wrong and should have the freedom to say so (as we have had for hundreds of years!)

As a country we have always been proud of our freedom to speak out but this law is only discouraging free speech. I believe that we have the right to make statements which may offend other people but these days it is even becoming an 'offence to offend someone else'.

Mrs Elma Young
17 July 2020