

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM HEATHER E. LENNOX

Dear Sir/Madam,

I have read your Bill with care and have decided to focus on your Question 6.

“Do you have views on the merits of Part 2 of the Bill and the plans to introduce a new OFFENCE OF STIRRING UP OF HATRED”?

I am presenting my response as a Christian believer and have noted that this Bill covers, in respect of above.

- (1) Religion
- (2) Sexual orientation and
- (3) Transgender identity

I believe that in its current form Part 2 of the Bill is a serious threat to our freedom of speech.

May I emphasize I am writing as a Christian and a retired professional in the caring services and my response is founded on:

- (a) As a believer in the WORD OF GOD we are commanded to love HIM and our neighbour as ourselves---this is unconditional.
- (b) Each person has a right to love, approval and consistency in his/her life.
- (c) Each individual has the right to personal dignity.
- (d) I would never support threatening or abusive behaviour.
- (e) I have a responsibility to afford courtesy, respect, protection to those who are vulnerable in our society and attempt to reach out with empathy. In other words attempt to ‘stand in his/her shoes ‘and in a non-judgmental manner remembering with humility “there but for the grace of GOD go I”.
- (f) I give thanks to GOD and those in Leadership in our country for our existing freedom to outlive and share the Christian Gospel.

Lord Bracadale’s Independent Review on Hate Crime Report, which led to this Bill, stressed the need for a clear distinction between “legitimate debate and rabble rousing”.

In my opinion, this Bill has failed in achieving this.

I have learned in life that ‘hate’ is really indifference and in love we must confront it in all circumstances.

CONCLUSION

I believe our existing CRIMINAL LAW covers threatening or abusive behaviour. Tampering with our current legislation will lead to a more divisive society where our well established Standards of equity, fairness and human kindness will be even further eroded.

With thanks,

Heather E. Lennox
18 July 2020