

**JUSTICE COMMITTEE**

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

**SUBMISSION FROM DR LINDA ROBERTSON AND MR DANNY DAVIS**

We are very concerned about possible unintended outcomes of the Hate Crime Bill should it become law.

In particular, we are concerned that the new offence of stirring up hatred (question 6) could have a huge impact on our long held and great tradition of freedom of speech.

For example, a preacher in either a mosque or a church could say something reflecting the truths and values of their beliefs, with absolutely no intention of “stirring up hatred” but could be misinterpreted by those of other views resulting in prosecution of said preachers.

We hold freedom of speech to be of such value that this part of the bill should be dropped or amended for the protection of those upholding the truth, as they have a right to such belief.

Debate, even in parliament itself could similarly be construed as stirring up hatred, but honest open debate is a healthy thing for our society.

Dr Linda Robertson (Mrs Davis) MB ChB, MRCP, DCH and Mr Danny Davis  
18 July 2020