

JUSTICE COMMITTEE

HATE CRIME AND PUBLIC ORDER (SCOTLAND) BILL

SUBMISSION FROM NEIL SMITH

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to make a brief submission to the committee, particularly with regard to Question 6.

It is concerning that the proposed legislation apparently includes offences committed when the accused was unaware of committing an offence, and did not intend to commit one.

The legislation does not make enough of an attempt to safeguard the rights of freedom of expression. People who hold to strong and sincerely held beliefs should be challenged and by all means persuaded to alter their viewpoints, but unless they have caused actual harm to someone, that is, have shown malice in expressing their views, then they have a right to be left in peace.

The law will, in my opinion, be overstepping its bounds if it begins to prosecute people for their mere beliefs.

Yours faithfully,

Neil Smith
18 July 2020