Submission from Miguel Nacenta

Dear Committee Clerk,

I would like to express my unequivocal opposition to the Higher Education Governance Bill.
I think the bill is damaging to the higher education sector in Scotland and to the people of Scotland in general.

I believe that the proposed bill undermines the necessary independence of the university, and if it passes it will result in a weaker higher education sector. One of the most important functions of the University is to offer alternative views and to analyse reality in alternative ways. Any increase of governmental control over the governance of the university will constrain and damage the ability of academics to do their job independently; even very subtle interventions can have a lasting damaging impact.

This effects will trickle down to the quality of education and the ability of students to be critical thinkers, a skill that is increasingly necessary.

There are many examples in the world of the consequences that government influence in academic institutions can have, including my own country of origin, Spain, and the former Soviet Republics in the twentieth century.
The academic institutions in neither of these examples have been able to recover yet from their intervention. I am not suggesting that the bill will be as dramatic as these two examples, but any step into those directions, even by a democratically elected government, is a step in the wrong direction.

Sincerely,

Miguel Nacenta